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Connections between gendered constructions and women's lived
experiences in light of feminist awareness: an empirical hermeneutic study

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty

of the Department of Psychology

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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March, 2004

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Title: Connections between gendered constructions and women's lived
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ABSTRACT

Connections between gendered constructions and women's lived experiences in light of feminist awareness: an empirical hermeneutic study

This study explored two women's gendered identities in an effort to elucidate oppressive aspects of patriarchal gender constructions. Gender was conceptualized in feminist post-structural terms, which meant that it was seen as an identity conferred upon women in the service of creating a hierarchical discourse. Since feminist post-structural theories are rarely explored empirically and women's experiences have often been overlooked, both of these issues were explored in the current study.

Participants' awareness of oppression and ability to dialogue with theory was addressed by soliciting women who had taken a gender-focused college course. The methodology was perspectival and co-participatory. The researcher's reflections were documented and shared with participants in addition to including participants in the analysis stage of the research. Participants and I met three times to address when their gender was an issue, and to discuss possible connections between their experiences and feminist post-structural insights.

Transcripts of the initial sessions were submitted to five analytic readings that addressed plot, voice of I, process level of interaction, links to cultural contexts, and power dynamics within the study. This five reading approach was then synthesized into individualized accounts that were presented to the participants for feedback on two separate occasions.

Gendered identity emerged as an identity that was intrinsically connected to race, sexual identification, and class. Even though oppressive gender dynamics initially seemed explicit, further discussion with participants showed that there were many dynamics, particularly those connected to privilege, that were not apparent in the absence of pedagogical interventions.

Participants valued the insights provided by feminist post-structural accounts even though they found it difficult to imagine others accepting the cultural changes prescribed by these theorists. While gender-focused coursework provided participants with some insight about women's issues, insight was constricted when instructors did not address feminist agendas and the power dynamics that maintained oppression. Exposing participants to new conceptualizations of gender helped them to engage in self-reflection, and as such, become more aware of the ways they were constricted by patriarchy. Most importantly, participants' (including this researcher's) reflections allowed us to propose ways that we could empower ourselves by subverting patriarchal prescriptions.

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INTRODUCTION

Goals for the study

Feminist post-structuralists argue that gender exists only in so far as it is defined by cultural prescriptions. I believe that the post-structural stance provides places from which to question current oppressive gender prescriptions. These places seem to become lost, however, when the theories appear to lack a connection to lived experience. In an effort to elucidate these places, I asked two women to reflect on their experiences as women, and engaged in a dialogue about the effects of their identifications as women. I hermeneutically investigated the nature and significance of the arguments posed by feminist post-structuralists by integrating them with participants' stories as a means of illustration. In doing so, I attempted to situate the feminist post-structuralist theories with the lived experiences of women to clarify the lived experience of oppression within a cultural construction that does not pose this experience as such. I also wanted to understand how women experience their own oppression, given their exposure to a gender-focused course that made it thematic.

I explored the participants' identification as female in light of cultural prescriptions by interviewing participants whose understanding of gender was challenged through feminist ideology offered in a classroom setting. I anticipated that women who had taken a gender -focused course would have questioned their conceptualization of themselves as female within the course, making it easier for them to reflect on and discuss their personal gendered narratives in interviews. I asked participants to reflect on how their gender identification has impacted their lives. I focused on their experiences of oppression, because I wanted to elucidate feminist post-structural arguments that asserted this oppression. Although I focused on the oppressive aspects of gendered designation, I left the dialogue open to explore positive effects of identifying as a woman, and included these positive descriptions in the narrative accounts as well. I used the narratives, as told

by the participants, to explore how their lived experiences related to the arguments posed by the feminist post-structuralists, and discussed the implications accordingly.

Choosing women from a gender-focused course enabled me to look at the ways in which feminist thought was addressed and subsequently understood by those who were exposed to it. By doing so, I gained a clearer understanding of what the participants got out of such courses, and how their responses related to political arenas. Because we have all been appropriated by a system that prescribes a dismissive stance towards women's stories and feminist agendas, I anticipated that there would be some difficulty integrating gender focused course exposure to ideas with lived cultural norms. Querying women who were exposed to feminist ideology provided a unique opportunity to pose questions about the overall apathy that threatens even those of us who are drawn to gender issues. I looked to my participants to see if learning about, and discussing gender issues disrupted the apathy that surrounds gender oppression.

In order to avoid losing the richness of the participants' responses, I preserved the tension between their responses and my power as the researcher to make interpretations by maintaining a dialogue throughout the collection and analysis stages of my research. I spoke openly with my participants about my intentions for the study. I also provided the participants' with two opportunities to give feedback about my interpretations and share in the decision making process. The participants gave the final approval of the accounts as they were developed and as they now stand as the findings of this study. Though I anticipated that I would not always agree with their perceptions, I found that the participants' reactions and clarifications of the narratives were crucial to the development of narratives since my goal was to valorize their voices as they each chose to be heard. By doing so, I hoped that I was able to empower my participants and therefore enact a feminist post-structural stance.

Personal reflections that have led to this study

My initial inclination toward feminist identification emerged as I, along with 300 other students (both female and male) participated in an introduction to sociology course at a large university in 1994. As an introduction to the topic of gender issues, the teaching assistant asked us to raise our hands if we identified as feminists. I hesitated before identifying myself because I had never participated in any political action, and was worried that I did not deserve this title. I was more worried, however, that I would be perceived as a "male hater," or a radical! I was shocked to find that only three of us raised our hands.

Now my shock seems misplaced. Apathetic responses to women's issues, and feminist ideals, is the norm. According to Williams and Wittig, (1997) a 1989 Time/CNN national poll showed that 57% of American women supported the need for a feminist movement, while only 37% of these same women identified themselves as feminists, and even less supported affirmative changes. Williams and Wittig concluded that the stigma attached to feminist identification stemmed from a lack of information and a preponderance of misinformation.

What does this apathy mean to women's position in this society? This is a question I have asked myself many times. I, like the women in the Williams and Wittig survey, find myself verbally supporting the tenets of feminism, but I rarely take action to support this cause. I have struggled with my own desire to make changes and have often come up empty, as I have not known what to do to promote, let alone enact change. My frustration with my lack of action led to the development of this study. I wanted to take a stand and explore the struggles that other women faced when they learned about feminist issues and agendas. I also wanted to disrupt the apathy by giving voice to the particular issues that women face by engaging in an open discussion with other women, and potentially generate enthusiasm for this issue that may help to disrupt apathy.

Feminist post-structural theories posed gender as a social construct that emerges as a result of oppressive power dynamics. The current power dynamics are said to be patriarchal as gender is conceptualized as a dichotomous system that differentiates between males and females. Patriarchy, as a system of power, is intentionally striving towards the maintenance of this dichotomy that designates male superiority through power distribution. Feminist literature has thoroughly argued that women's historical absence from cultural representation has resulted in an oppressed position, making it difficult for women to begin to reappropriate their position. According to Rich, each feminist work appears “as if from nowhere” (1979, p. 53). This “nowhere” powerfully renders women ahistorical, with no means, or right to speak, and no foundation to build upon. The historical lack of women's cultural representation has left women dis-empowered and excluded from the production of cultural forms (See Spender, 1980, Butler, 1993, Cixous, 1993, hooks, 1990).

While female subjectivity has been hidden, male subjectivity appears as if it is the sole representation of human dialogue. As a result, male subjectivity “has been legitimized and made unquestionable by conceptualizing it as objectivity” (Spender, 1980, p. 61, Irigaray, 1985, Butler, 1990, & 1993). As objectivity, patriarchy has successfully rendered all other discourses false especially those produced by women. Women have yet to find their voice and as a result have remained a “muted group” (Spender, 1980, p. 61). I aimed to discover what kinds of narratives would emerge when women, as a muted group, were asked to speak.

Summary

In keeping with feminist post-structural ideology, I believe that gender is culturally constructed. I believe that the current gendered prescription is characterized by oppression, with women being the object of oppression. As a result, women's stories have been ignored and covered over, making it difficult for women to explore the meanings of this oppression, and the avenues available to disrupt the effects of being

oppressed. I utilized feminist post-structural insights to avoid becoming an oppressive researcher, and instead adopted an empowering stance that preserved the experiences of participants. I also compared theories posed by feminist post structuralists to relate these insights to the lived experiences of women whose understanding of gender was thematized through course work, among other experiences. I believe that this multi-leveled analysis provided some insight about the apathy about women's oppression, while also serving as an example of the possibility of disruption of apathy through dialogue.

Through my literature review, I explored some ways in which gendered experience has been appropriated. I used these varying conceptualizations to situate the struggles that female participants encountered, while also using participants' descriptions to clarify the theories put forth by feminist post-structuralists. By requesting feedback from my participants throughout my analysis, I preserved the tension between the participant's intentions and my interpretations of their dialogue, in an effort to avoid an objectifying, and/or otherwise patriarchal stance. By engaging in dialogue with the participants, we were able to disrupt our shared apathy about our experiences of oppression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Situating gendered narratives

Feminist post-structural accounts of gender have developed in response to gender conceptualizations that have hindered our understanding of what it means to be women and nullified attempts to resist oppression. In order to flesh out the arguments posed by post-structuralists and to provide a background for participants' identity as gendered, I will provide a brief summary of accounts that have supported our current system of gendered designation. From this discussion, I hope to clarify the places from which feminist post-structural accounts provide new opportunities for gendered explorations and develop a methodological approach that fits with the feminist post-structural agenda.

Naturalistic accounts of gender

Most psychological research has assumed that gender distinctions are essentially biological, considering societal influence to be secondary. Studies have focused on formulating differences between men and women instead of looking at the power dynamics that enforce these differences. By focusing on the establishment of a biological difference, the meaning of the difference becomes secondary, and the oppressive condition of women is ignored.

Lippa and Hershberger's (1991) study added to the body of research that supports the idea that there is a difference between men and women, but did not contribute to our understanding of the function of these differences or what these differences meant. Lippa & Hershberger (1991) offered evidence that gender differences continued to exist despite widespread changes in gender discourse in Western cultures. Even though Lippa and Hershberger showed that gender continued to be an identification of differentiation, and they recognized that environmental changes altered the kinds of statements men and women would subscribe to, they continued to appeal to biological accounts for an explanation of this difference. When participants' responses corresponded to traditional gender constructs, they attributed this difference to a biologically driven differentiation.

They failed to question what continued to make these subscriptions viable, and therefore dropped culture as a significant contributor to gender norms.

Turning to accounts that have focused on the function of gender distinction brings Levi-Strauss's work into the discussion. Levi-Strauss is included in the 'Naturalistic Accounts' section because, despite the fact that he focused on social relations, ultimately his explanations relied on naturalistic distinctions. Although Levi-Strauss's work provides a richer description of the function of gender distinctions, it is also problematic because it justifies and necessitates the oppression of women.

Levi-Strauss argued in his landmark work, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. (1969), that gender differences are necessary and fundamental to the survival of human society. Levi-Strauss focused on kinship systems as the organizational structure of societal interactions that take precedence over biological givens. He gave precedence to the kinship system of marriage because this system seemed, to him, the most fundamental of all kinship structures. In his words:

Rules of kinship and marriage are the social state itself. [Rules of kinship] reshap[e] biological relationships, and natural sentiments forcing them into structures implying them as well as others, and compelling them to rise above their original character (Levi-Strauss, 1969, p.490).

In other words, Levi Strauss argued that biological givens could be reshaped in accordance with rules of kinship. Levi-Strauss granted precedence to marital bonds because of the subsequent relationships established when two groups were in the process of agreeing upon rules of marital exchange. Levi-Strauss argued that these relationship bonds, more than genetic consideration, ensured the survival of some groups and not others. In summary, the exchange process provided the means from which groups were able to make valuable connections to other groups and as a consequence, provide sexual unions that would ensure survival of the species.

Although Levi-Strauss initially conceptualized gender as a product of social systems and not a biological given, he went on to identify people by virtue of their “biological considerations.” Levi-Strauss wrote “ it is only from a biological, certainly not a social point of view that motherhood, sisterhood, or daughterhood are properties of the individuals considered” (p. 482). Maleness is a necessary qualifier for determining who mediates the exchange process, while femaleness is the necessary designation for those who are to be exchanged (1969, p. 480).

The total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman, but between two groups of men, the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners (Levi-Strauss, 1969, 115).

Levi-Strauss’s reliance on naturalistic distinctions necessitated a denial of women’s subjectivity. Rubin (1997) asserted that Levi-Strauss “constructed an implicit theory of sexual oppression” (p. 35). According to Rubin, the defeat of women was Levi-Strauss’s prerequisite of culture (p. 38). Women were denied subjectivity, and were therefore denied the right to speak in order to prevent a disruption in the system of exchange. In other words, the oppression of women becomes an explicit and necessary condition for human society. Women become objects that acquire value only in so far as we provide the means from which men are distinguished, as well as being the object to be exchanged. In the words of Levi-Strauss (1969), “women must not have objects of personal desire since desire implies subjectivity” (p. 469). Nor must women be "subjects of the desire of others," due to the potential that their inherent value may override, or elude the exchange system all together (p. 496). Male subjectivity, and therefore the existing kinship system, is dependent upon the denial of the subjectivity of women.

Implications of naturalistic accounts

To talk about gender in terms of biology leads focus away from the oppressive dynamics at play in our current system to questions of origin. Both studies by Lipka and Hersberger and Levi-Strauss implied that gender designations and subsequent

differences originated from a natural distinction, ignoring the effects. Rubin's critique, like many post-structural accounts assert that origin studies support the patriarchal system by justifying women's oppression and presenting resistance as futile. This suggests that we must distance ourselves from a discussion of origin and biology and instead look at the power of social systems.

Gender role investigations: investigating patterns of behavior

Although gender role studies have attempted to account for changes in gendered behavioral patterns and attitudes reflected in the environment, they have continued to rely on biological distinctions to measure these changes (see Blair, 1993, Huston, & Geis, 1993, Markman, Silver, Clements, & Kraft-Hanak, 1993). Gender role studies focus on the classification of people based on how closely their behavior/attitudes match with current stereotypes of gender and the effects that the adoption of gendered behavior patterns or roles have on their relationships. Participant's identification with behaviors and or attitudes continues to be situated within a dichotomized system that is based upon the distinctions posed by naturalistic accounts. As a result, these studies have failed to offer an account that is different from studies that grant primacy to naturalistic distinctions.

Although gender role studies have helped to highlight the importance of the environment, they have stopped short of exploring the meanings of what is reflected in the environment (Lather, 1991, p. 71, Weisstein, 1993). They have not questioned the effects that certain gender role ideologies have on women's oppression because they have not explored the meanings and value judgments attached to what is considered feminine versus what is considered masculine. Gender role studies continue to ascribe to a dichotomized system that ebbs and flows within what is considered to be natural constraints. As a result, the status quo is maintained in much the same way as strictly naturalistic accounts, and no new understanding of gender is gained.

Implications of gender role studies

Gender role studies have failed to account for changes in gender discourse because they continue to get caught up within a biological-positive science perspective that does not allow for a critical examination of gender. Rather than examining how we conceptualize gender, the studies focus on issues of causality. Complicated behaviors and individual differences that are constantly changing can never be captured within positivist models because they can not be isolated and measured, nor can causal relationships be implied (Weisstein, 1993, p. 221). Despite the flaws, these studies have successfully covered over the need to reconceptualize gender in a way that opens up a new discourse on gender, specifically the effects of the current gender system.

Reconceptualizing gender as a socially designated position: a look at critical theory

Some feminist post-structuralists have focused on reconceptualizing gender as a system of oppression by dialoging with Marxist theory. These feminist post-structuralists argued that oppression lied at the very root of distinguishing between genders and focused on power dynamics instead of issues of causality. They contended that categorization of people implied comparison and subsequent domination of one group over another.

Rubin (1997), and Wittig (1997) among many other feminist writers, have reconstituted Marxist analyses. Unlike Marx, they have focused on the denial of women's subjectivity, instead of class, to highlight the effects of this denial and expanded the dialogue of economic oppression to include the oppressive dynamics inherent to discretely gendered systems of all kinds. Like Marx, feminist writers have looked at the function of the oppression and have attempted to uncover the agenda inherent within the current gendered system.

Wittig (1997) critiqued Marxist's denial of subjectivity to both men and women because this discourse disclosed resistance as futile. She critiqued Marxists' contention that the division of labor emanates from a naturally given order, because this relegates

women to a biologically designated position that is unalterable through actions of resistance (p. 270). Wittig also pointed out that Marxist accounts deny subjectivity to the individual regardless of gender, in the absence of which men and women have no consciousness/identity outside of their economic class. Wittig argued that this lack of autonomy renders resistance of any kind impossible.

From this analysis, Wittig (1997) deduced that both men's and women's awareness of their oppression (class or otherwise) is the place from which resistance becomes possible. She argued that this awareness must occur on an individual level instead of at the level of class because class-consciousness could not occur without individual participation (p. 270). She posited awareness of oppression as an experience of subjectivity that thereby permits the individual the autonomy necessary for resistance (p. 270). Hence, Wittig advocated consciousness raising on a small scale as a means of resistance.

Rubin (1997) focused on the expansion of Marxist economic analyses to include the "political, educational, and organic systems" that contribute to identity formation of the oppressed and the oppressor (p. 39). In her words, "[gender] has been systematically stripped of its function-political, economic, educational, and organic" (p. 39). In keeping with Marxist claims, Rubin argued that the function of gendered distinctions are covered over in order to maintain a system of oppression that maintains stratification of power. Instead of focusing on the economic relationships however, Rubin contended that the current system of gendered distinction maintains the current stratification extant within political, educational, organic, and economic systems. Rubin theorized that the reduction of current gender distinction to "barest bones-sex and gender" successfully reified gendered oppression by posing it as a consequence that emanated from the unquestionable and unchangeable natural order. The resulting discourse is particularly detrimental to women because women and anything defined as "feminine," is associated with deficiency (Rubin, 1997, p. 40).

Implications from post-structural analyses of critical accounts

By conceptualizing sex-gender as a socially constructed entity, both Wittig (1997) and Rubin (1997) highlighted the importance of exploring the sex/gender system as it relates to oppressive dynamics. In accordance with Rubin and Wittig, I conceptualized gender as a social construction and focused on the oppressive dynamics that impacted women's lived experience. The documentation of the oppressive effects experienced by women showed the relevance of investigating gender as a system of oppression.

In an effort to show the means through which social designation theorists like Rubin and Wittig account for gender designation, I drew from Lacan's theory of identity formation. I have chosen to highlight Lacan's concepts that are specifically related to the psychological process through which gender designation is produced in social interaction. Lacan's theory is especially relevant to this study because he emphasized the power of the social to designate gender, and also sparked other theorists to explore more thoroughly the effects that this designation has for those marked as women.

Following the discussion of Lacan's work, I fleshed out the feminist post-structural formulations of Irigaray and Butler because they reconceptualized Lacan's work in a way that emphasized the oppressive dynamics inherent to the current system of gender designation and offered strategies of resistance. In keeping with the ideas of Rubin and Wittig, Irigaray and Butler both emphasized awareness as the means from which resistance becomes possible. I drew from their theories of resistance to develop a post-structurally relevant empirical analysis that aimed to disrupt this oppression by highlighting the perspectivity of knowledge, and adopting a methodology that empowered the participants to disrupt the linear voice of the researcher.

Lacan's theory of identity formation: a socio-linguistic account of gender designation

In the "Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud," Lacan (1957/1977), reworked Saussure's linguistic theory to account for the pervasive influence

that language has had on social construction, and submitted psychoanalysis to this reworking. Lacan privileged the power of social interaction and focused on language systems as the primary foundation from which identity formation emerged. Though Lacan did not advocate a relativist view of humanity, he did pose language as a system that had the power to shape human identifications through signification. The Lacanian subject was marked by division and lack (Žižek, 1994, p. 11). The language system was not seen as neutral, merely serving to represent reality. Instead language was conceptualized as a system that was capable of posing that which is signified, and what is not.

In other words, language was not conceptualized by Lacan as a system that designated words to serve as a representation of what was there. Instead it was seen as a system that designated and gave shape with positionality. This positionality was both indicative of the subject/object while also being indicative of the way the subject/object (person/thing) was taken up within a particular, though not necessary, prescriptive realm. Lacan posited that the only way to access that which remained tenuously inside and outside of discourse was through fantasy, since he believed that only then could we differentiate between ourselves as dream figures and that of conscious subjects.

Our current prescriptive horizon is predominantly patriarchal and objectifying. As a result, language is conceived as a system that merely designates that which is there. Language is seen as a system of designation, without positionality. As such, biological differentiation is taken up as *the* reality of gender difference with no potential for alternate conceptualizations. The current system of designation is assumed to result from a natural differentiation that is predetermined by biological means.

Lacan's conceptualization of language/reality as a positional interaction moves away from this objectified patriarchal 'reality.' For Lacan identity was the process by which the individual was conceived and perceived as a subject by others and by the self. Identity was formed as a process of representation by which the subject was designated as

a subject from “inside the non-subject constituted by the network of signifiers” (Pecheux, 1994, p. 149). More precisely, the “subject was caught in the network [of signifiers]” (p. 149).

In the “Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function” Lacan (1949/1996) explored how linguistic marking shaped identity formation. According to Lacan, a child’s identification of self as an ego is solidified when a signifier (proper name) is attached to the child and the child identifies with it. The child’s realization of his/her ego/identity is mediated by others, since those who ‘mark’ the child signify how s/he is to be treated. The “marking” of the child and recognition by the child of this mark is the moment when s/he is born into the ‘Symbolic.’ This is when the child recognizes that s/he is distinguished with a name, and therefore exists separately from others.

This name or ‘mark’ comes to symbolize more than mere nomenclature because it carries a prescription for the child’s identity. In Lacan’s words, (1957/1977), “[The child] by virtue of a name at birth, is already a slave to language” (p. 148). This mark (name) institutes a place from which the signified will emerge and therefore ties the child to the Symbolic Order. Being tied to the current ‘Symbolic Order’ or large-scale system of language is necessary for the child to interact and communicate with others.

Lacan associated gender and all designations of the ‘Symbolic’ with what he termed “the laws of the symbolic order” (Evans, D., 1996, p. 201). According to Lacan, the “Law” though posed as a system of rules that exists above and beyond any biological designation and that of any individual or culture, remains imaginary. The ‘Law’ defines and designates limits that are necessary for the development of a healthy identity within the current prescriptive (what I will call) matrix. The ‘Law’ is no more ‘Real’ or true than any other term outside of the ‘Symbolic Order’ (Fink, 1997, pp.253-4). It is an ideal, a conceptualization of a limit that must exist to keep the current system of designation going. As a member of the Symbolic Order, the child is dependent upon the mark that is

articulable. This mark differentiates the child from that which s/he is not (infinity, Law) to that which s/he is—an ego with the possibility of linguistic interaction.

The Symbolic Order has the power to influence and perpetuate acceptable narratives of subjectivity, and covers over other dynamics by leaving them unarticulated. The birth of language symbolizes subjectivity as a looking out to others, and then a reflecting back on the self as seen by others. According to Lacan, this particular type of subjectivity is dependent upon the ‘Law’ remaining unconscious, and therefore above reproach (Lacan, 1957/1977, p. 149). As Žižek (1994) reminds us, “the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective” (p. 8).

The ‘Law’ is to be instated by the ‘paternal function.’ The ‘paternal function’ instates the ‘Law’ by functioning as a limit of authority beyond the mother (Fink, 1997, p. 110). As such, the child is tied to something beyond the mother and has to answer to a higher authority. Though Lacan differentiated the “paternal function” from the masculine subject that has traditionally been expected to fill this role, he asserted that someone or something outside of the mother was needed to instate limits. Though arbitrary, the limits serve to initiate the child into the linguistic realm.

Lacan conceptualized gender as a system that is created by the ‘Law’ as it is currently conceptualized. For Lacan, the current system of representation is “a set of differentiating linguistic rules that effectively create sexual differences” (Butler, 1990, p. 27). In other words, the ‘Law’ as it currently functions, poses gender as an attribute that exists outside of representation. We live gender as if this designation exists outside of concrete practices. We take up the differentiation of gender as a construct that exists in binarical form, and emanates from a biological distinction, with no ‘outside’ or alternate possibility, even though, within Lacan’s formulation, this necessity is not accurate.

Gender designation occurs, as a child is constituted by others, as a ‘girl,’ or ‘boy.’ The child comes to realize what is to be carried along with this signification and

identifies accordingly if s/he develops 'normally.' Through identification with this 'mark' s/he is likely to become a 'girl' or 'boy' as constructed consciously and 'unconsciously' by society.

The 'masculine' and 'feminine' are signified in accordance with prohibitive rules, (incest taboo) that "produce intelligible genders" (Butler, 1990, p. 28). Throughout development, all of the child's subsequent identifications occur in relation to the implications of this marking. Intelligible genders are seen as necessary for both heterosexual desire and masculine subjectivity. For Lacan, like Levi-Strauss, the division of gender is an effect of the 'Law' (incest taboo) as we currently live within a patriarchal symbolic matrix.

Lacan posited gender distinction as fictive, and discussed the gender distinction as a fictive law that none the less was called forth from the unconscious realm of the 'Symbolic' (Butler, 1990, p. 55). Lacan asserted that repression of the 'feminine' was a necessary condition for the development of the male subject as the male subject exists in the current patriarchal system of designation (Butler, 1990, p. 43-47). For Lacan, 'woman' exists only as a "symptom of male fantasy" (Walkerdine, 1997, p. 181). Thus, the object of fantasy is not woman as a pre-existing given, but as fantasy of what men both desire and fear in the 'Other' who retains less power (p. 181). This desire and fear of what is *Not*, is that which founds the male subject, leaving women to be defined as lacking, even though both male and female subjectivity is defined as a lack. The mutual dependence on each other (male and female) leads to a system of oppression as only men are granted subjectivity in the authoritative sense. This dependence remains unconscious and must remain so in order to avoid disruption of the current system. Lacan dismissed charges that the 'masculine' or male subject was superior to the "feminine," though he did not expand the dialogue of oppression that emanates from these opposing fictive accounts (Fink, 1997, 110-111).

Irigaray (1985) and Butler (1990) have both looked at Lacan's work on linguistic theory and identity formation as a means of exploring the link between gendered selves and social systems. I drew from both of their discussions to formulate a means from which to investigate the effects that female designation had on the participants in my study. I believe that this analysis helped to situate feminist post-structural analyses in a way that enacted the resistance advocated by these writers.

Irigaray's expansion of Lacan's call to Order: accounting for gender with room for change

Irigaray expanded Lacan's theory of identity formation, and called the existing symbolic order a "sham" which "fails to recognize its own endogamies" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 192). She used Lacan's representation of gender as a fictive account to voice the otherwise silenced effects of the current gender prescription (p. 69). She did not believe that the current system of gender represented the best alternative because in her words it is "always a project of diversion, deflection, and reduction of the other in the Same" (p. 74). To speak about women within this discourse, "may always boil down to a recuperation of the feminine within a logic that maintains it in repression, censorship, and nonrecognition" (p. 78).

Irigaray (1985) believed that the fluid and plural desire of women threatened to disrupt the linearity of the current patriarchal system because this desire has not been represented in the current symbolic order. Irigaray contended that the desire of women is of a "different economy." This "economy," is one that upsets the linearity of a project, undermines the goal object of desire, and "diffuses the polarization toward a single pleasure, all of which "disconcerts fidelity of a single discourse" (p. 29). The 'economy' of women's desire is disruptive precisely because it has been left out and posed as unrepresentable. As an outside, this 'economy' is less symbolized, though it remains fictive and would be initiated into the realm of the 'Symbolic' as soon as it is thematized.

Drawing from Lacan's theory of identity formation, Irigaray (1985) pointed out that the patriarchal order has "produced" woman as a lack because she is dependent upon man, (or 'the Other' in Lacan's terms), to define her (p. 26). Women must seek approval within the current system to gain a sense of worth. Because society reflects the woman as lack, the woman fulfills their role within society accordingly. In Irigaray's words, "[women] must conform with their bodies to society's conflicting demands of both exhibition and chastity" (p. 26). They must "perform" as objects of appeal to "stimulate the demands of the subject (man)" (p.26). Women are denied comparison and expression of their unique desire, which is plural. With no recognition/signification, "women's desire is abandoned" (p. 175).

As the mirror, man desires an object that both reflects himself and what he does not want to see in himself (Irigaray, 1985, p. 182). Man as subject serves as the judge endowed with the power to hold up Lacan's mirror to appropriate or dis-appropriate what is and what is not to be reflected (p. 177). Only "subjects" (men) have the power of language to signify and therefore grant value to the signified. As that which must be signified, the signifiers (men) have the power to deny. Women as superfluous lack have thus been signified and valued as such.

Irigaray noted that "[women] yield to men [or the masculine order] their natural and social value as a locus of imprints, marks, and mirage of his activity" (p. 177). Women are marked by lack in so far as men [masculine order] are dependent upon this lack. In order to attain "value of and for men", "women must relinquish their bodies to [men]," to give them something to look at and think about (Irigaray, 1985, p. 177). Women are called to stimulate that which they do not have in order to compensate for their rejected "nothing to see" (p. 26).

As objects for men, women have no outlet other than to "mimic a language they have not produced" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 189). As objects, women can not speak. Thus, women can never be signifiers and remain that which is signified. Women's desire is

unarticulable and therefore remains unconscious. As a result, women are precluded from having any type of relationship between them apart from the existing order (p.177).

Resistance Irigaray style

Irigaray (1985) countered claims that women had no subjectivity by valorizing the unsignified -women's libidinal organization. Using Lacan's definition of subjectivity as lack, women retain subjectivity in the strictest meaning of the word. Irigaray argued that women's subjectivity eluded the phallogentric symbolic order by not covering over fictive roots, and as thus, could be used to valorize the lacking quality of 'feminine' identities. As a lack, women's identity provides the room to create a new fictive subjectivity that eludes the current phallogentric order. In other words, male subjectivity as the dominant, sole representation of authority is more vulnerable to disruption precisely because it's superiority is so dependent upon a hierarchical construction of identity.

Women's subjectivity could therefore become the place from which resistance of the current order was possible (1985, p. 182). Irigaray contended that women should use the 'mark' of 'woman' as the place from which to begin to resist and therefore disrupt the patriarchal order. By doing so, Irigaray granted women a ground from which to reflect back on themselves outside of "femininity," and therefore resist the role of non-subject.

My intention to work with women while simultaneously questioning this designation makes sense in relation to the importance of questioning the effects of the current prescriptions of gender designation. Giving women space from which to articulate our experience, and share it amongst ourselves provides us with a preliminary step towards self reflection and reflection on our current system of culture. Retaining a gendered position, permits 'women' to speak about our experiences as such, and thus provides a means from which the positions of power can be analyzed.

In accordance with Irigaray's (1985) contention that we must resist the singularity demanded by the patriarchal system, I developed an interpretive method that valorized

what is usually not seen, counted, or otherwise categorized (p. 218). Through interpretive analyses, I was able to unveil some of the ambiguity that could not be accounted for by objectivist or positivist accounts. I attempted to call attention to, and elucidate the "in between" by attending to the power dynamics inherent within my project (p. 213). I attempted to preserve the plurality of voices by documenting the participants' responses to my interpretations and including these voices as they emerged during multiple meetings.

Irigaray reminds us that singular 'truths' constrict and oppress other possibilities. In keeping with this ideology, empirical research must be open to scrutiny to ensure that one voice does not silence others. Through the articulation of my presuppositions, I highlighted the uneven distribution of power that my role as the researcher afforded. I did this in order to provide the reader with a window into my judgments and formulations and to aid in the development of alternative interpretations. This articulation, in combination with participants' feedback, helped me to assert my interpretations in a way that did not reify the power dynamics inherent within the structure from which this research project arose.

My desire to link feminist post-structural theories with an empirical investigation also fit with Irigaray's valorization of materiality (1985, p. 78). Irigaray summoned a new constitution of meaning to replace the existing order that is "enmeshed in metaphysical and patriarchal abstractions" (Game, 1991, p. 85). Irigaray used the metaphor of "two lips" to further link women's materiality to her vision of a different kind of symbolic system. I also moved beyond conjecture about women's oppression to exploring the different kinds of meaning that this experience had for women who were living within a patriarchal system.

Making room for change: Butler's appropriation of gender as performance and melancholia

Butler did not endorse Irigaray's hail for women's subjectivity as a primary means of resistance. Instead, she advocated for coalitions among humans with no pre-figured or unnecessarily constricted identity. Butler (1990) (like Walkerdine), expanded Lacan's concept of identity formation, and focused particularly on the space between reality and the real. In Žižek's words, "the gap that separates the real from reality is what opens up the space for performative in its opposition to constative" (p. 32). According to Butler, (1990) gender is a performance, a doing, with no preexisting demand for dichotomization once outside of compulsory heterosexual construction (p. 25).

Using a Nietzschean application, Butler theorized that "identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (p. 25). Thus, to be a 'woman' is not a being, but rather a becoming, with no beginning or end (p. 33). Butler opposed the marking of gender as a given, or as a transcendent utopian ideal and called for a "subversive confusion of categories" that have heretofore served as "foundational illusions of identity" (p. 34).

Butler (1997) went further in *The Psychic Life of Power*, to make sense of the steadfast connection to gendered identity, by conceptualizing gender identity (as it currently exists in Western cultures) as a state of melancholia. Drawing from Freud's theory of melancholia, Butler expounded upon the ego's negotiation of grief when faced with a loss of an attachment and connected this negotiation to the formation of gendered identity (pp.132-150). As such, Butler "shed light on the predicament of living within a culture which can mourn the loss of homosexual attachment only with great difficulty" (p. 133).

In an effort to avoid the grief and devastation when faced with loss of an attachment to a love object, the ego, as Freud conceptualized it, retains the attachment by internalizing that which the attachment represents. In an effort to resolve the grief of

complete loss, the ego is faced with a dilemma. The ego, as the psychic structure that mediates between sheer desire and the demand for limits, must negotiate between letting go of an attachment or holding onto the attachment through internalization of the lost love object as a means of substitution and avoidance of complete loss.

Butler used Freud's theory of melancholia to describe patriarchy's compulsory heterosexuality that necessitates the loss of homosexual attachments without providing the ability to mourn this loss. According to Butler (1997), gender identity can be conceptualized as a symptom of the grief that we are postponing by incorporating our same-gendered self objects instead of relinquishing these attachments. In an effort to avoid the complete loss of an 'Other' we incorporate the homosexual identities that we are denied, and become these identities. Butler (1997) preferred the term "incorporation," to "internalization" because she felt this term was a more accurate reflection of the idea that we are not "fully letting go," instead we go so far as to "preserve" the 'Other' or love object all together. We transfer the homosexual object from the external representation to an internal melancholic incorporation (p. 134). As a result of the avoidance of loss, we experience melancholia or grief that has no representation and is given no validation as emptiness.

This void of melancholic emptiness is partially filled by the adoption of a gendered identity that emerges in response to, or as a symptom of, the incorporation of the homosexual attachment (Butler, 1997, 135-7). Subsequently we adopt these gendered markers that grant a position within the current symbolic system and cover over the character of our subjectivity as lack. Masculine and feminine identities are "accomplishments of achieving heterosexuality" (p. 135). This accomplishment is posited by our current symbolic order as necessary and in compliance with the incest taboo, threats to which are threats to heterosexuality itself (p. 135).

Threats to heterosexuality result in a threat to gender as an identity. Individuals with homosexual desire become, in Butler's words, "panicked" that s/he is losing

femininity or masculinity (pp. 135-6). Heterosexuality predisposes “gendered dread” of being and becoming like the object of difference. When faced with homosexual desires we face the loss that we have tried to avoid, while also facing the literal loss of our identity.

We become used to the imposed limits of the current gendered system and feel unable to conceptualize our gendered identity in any way aside from the need to hold onto this mark as a mark of identity. Facing the loss of our current gendered identity seems inconceivable, though the panic experienced when this identity is challenged, suggests otherwise. Though Butler made no empirical claims, both participants of this study identified with this theory.

Butler (1990, & 1993) granted agency to the human being by formulating strategies of resistance within the current culture without imposing a determined nature upon an individual or implying that change could only occur within a utopian unity of women. She located the problem within the practices of signification and not in the epistemological realm (p. 144). This stance is in opposition to Levi-Strauss’s positing of women as biological givens, who are subsequently transformed into the social subordinate (p. 37). Woman is to be understood as a marker that is currently used in compliance with heterosexual compulsion of the current ‘Symbolic Order’ (as Lacan formulated). Butler contended that ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as identities must be contested in hopes of liberating that which has remained unintelligible (p. 144). She called for an intervention of the current oppressive order that reconfigures identity “as an effect” (p. 147). Thus, identity would no longer be seen as foundational, nor would it be seen as completely arbitrary. Instead, identity is participated in, repeated, and thus lends itself to critique and change (p. 147).

Resistance as fluid instead of futile: challenges for this empirical account

In my attempts to develop a feminist empirical exploration I was careful to avoid falling into what Butler (1990), called the “totalizing claims of a masculine signifying

economy" (p. 13). Butler reminded feminists to remain self-critical in order to avoid the recapitulation of a hierarchical stance (p. 13). Because I maintained my privileged position as the researcher despite my attempts to valorize my participant's voices, I was careful not to reify the process through which the meanings emerged. I was also careful not to assert generalizations that silenced other voices. Rather than ignoring the power dynamics inherent in my relationship with the participants, I attempted to articulate the places from which we entered into the dialogue.

I also heeded Butler's (1990) warning of the dangers of "identifying the enemy as singular" (p. 13). I tried not to ignore my ability to objectify the participants' voices. To ignore my place as a 'woman' or to valorize my role as a researcher privy to what others have missed, would have also been as misogynist as previous accounts that negated women's subjectivity. I did not claim to have escaped the complex power dynamics posed by interactions, culture, and personal histories, and instead tried to highlight places from which power dynamics played a part in the interactions. As Butler argued, power dynamics must be articulated if we are to avoid replacing the existing oppressor with a new one (p. 13).

Butler's philosophical premise that gender was performative instead of natural posed a problem to the subsequent analysis. This is important to point out because my decision to use gender as a means of differentiation for selection of participants threatened my desire to move away from the current conceptualization of gender. I used the patriarchal designation of gender to select participants because I aimed to investigate the experiences that emerged for women designated as such. I also decided to use only women in this current study because this designation provided me with a means of imposing limits on who was the focus of my investigation, and therefore provided a means to manage the scope of this project. Because my goal was to complete this study within a relatively short period of time, I developed a project that was more narrow and limited than the subject matter deserved.

Despite its limitations, I hope that this and future projects advocate for the problematization of assumptions that we make about gendered existence. I felt compelled to examine the meanings of the current oppressive dynamics, while also showcasing the liberating moments that arose as the two women's voices were valorized. In an effort to contribute to the body of feminist post-structural research, I posed the following methodology as a way to investigate gendered experiences that did not lose sight of the power dynamics that are intrinsic to empirical research. The difficulties intrinsic to this type of investigation were also highlighted in an effort to assist future feminist post-structural projects, while also calling attention to the restrictions placed on gendered experience by our current culture that is predominantly patriarchal.

METHOD

Developing a feminist post-structurally relevant methodology

Several feminist post-structural writers have attempted to design a framework from which empirical studies can begin to query the meanings and effects of gendered designation. These researchers have highlighted the need to situate both the researcher and the participants within a larger cultural narrative drawing from lived experience in ways that provoke and evoke strategies of resistance to gendered oppression.

Hermeneutic qualitative investigations provide the means to incorporate the influence that a researcher has on the people s/he studies and has therefore been advocated by feminist empirical researchers consistently (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, Standing, 1998, Butler, 1990, hooks, 1990).

Studying women: choosing participants whose experiences are likely to clarify and evoke collective advocacy against oppression

Despite the benefits gained as a result of the Women's Liberation Movement feminist's efforts remain largely unendorsed. The fact that people were successful in disrupting practices and beliefs on such a broad scale, shows that change is possible, yet research and lived experience continues to support the notion that we live in an oppressive patriarchal system. A study conducted by Williams and Wittig (1997) indicated that the lack of widespread feminist initiative, and hesitance in identifying with 'feminists' was influenced by negative perceptions of feminism. Students uniformly recognized that gender discrimination existed, yet did not identify feminist agendas consonantly.

I chose to work with women who have taken or were in the process of taking an academic course at either the undergraduate or graduate level that focused on gender/feminist issues. I was interested in working with a population that had learned about feminist theory so that I could gain access to women's experiences of gender in light of their understanding of feminism. I anticipated that students in a gender focused

course gained knowledge and clarity about feminist theory and that this may or may not corroborate Williams and Wittig's (1997) findings that feminist agendas were not endorsed because they were largely misunderstood. I was curious to see how or if knowledge about feminist agendas effected their identification with women's issues. I gained some insight about the participants' critiques or endorsements of the feminist agenda and questioned them about the relevance or lack thereof that feminist theories held for their daily lives. These discussions served as an intervention to disrupt the apathy that plagues the realization of collective advocacy.

I felt it would be problematic to seek participants solely on the basis of diversity since this would serve to marginalize certain groups further. I was open to working with women from any ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious background and did not discriminate based on age, sexual orientation, or any other particular characteristic. I believed that working with diverse participants would provide me with an opportunity to try to understand how different variables such as class, race, sexual orientation, and age intersects with experience of gender. However, I was unable to anticipate how this might effect the outcome of this study prior to its completion. Since I relied on individual's willingness to volunteer for participation, I was not able to fully address the issue of diversity or lack thereof, until I solicited for participation.

The two criteria that needed to be met were previous or current participation in a gender- focused course and identification as a woman. Because the two participants that I worked with did identify with additional 'marks' of diversity, this issue is addressed in the Results section and further in the Discussion section. I chose the participant's accounts based on their willingness to follow through with the requirements of the study (three interviews, two of which were in person) and the clarity that they provided to this phenomenon.

Studies have implicated the contradiction between beliefs about women's oppression and endorsement of liberal standards such as those emphasized in feminism

but they have not been willing or able to investigate the complexity of this issue. Slevin and Wingrove (1983) surveyed 103 “college aged” women, Loo and Thorpe (1998) worked with 122 undergraduate women, and Williams and Wittig (1997) relied on surveys from 94 women aged 17-50 years. All of these studies indicated that there was a discrepancy between women’s beliefs and their attitudes towards feminism, though none of the breadth-focused studies pursued the meanings of these findings in depth.

Dialoguing individually with women and spending time reflecting on my reactions involved a great deal of complexity that would have been sacrificed if I analyzed dialogues of a higher number of participants. I originally anticipated working with three participants, but decided that the richness provided in the accounts of two participants sufficed, because I was focused on depth instead of striving towards breadth. Working with a small number of participants allowed me to stay focused on our interactions and allowed me to reflect on our interactions during the analysis stage of the research. Working with two participants helped me to reflect on my reactions and catch sight of how I interacted differently with each participant. I was able to show some variation in the dialogues without becoming too individually focused or losing the complexity that I was after.

My goal was to valorize women's experiences by not comparing or posing them in opposition to men or each other, and instead focus on the development of relationships that encouraged and provoked thought in the vein of what hooks (1984) called ‘sisterhood.’ hooks (1984) believed that women needed to form bonds with each other to confront each other with differences and strengths and need to collectively demand change. She advocated for ‘sisterhood’ that was established through intense confrontations with each other, causing reflection individually and on a larger scale that would provide grounds for solidarity among women (p. 62). hooks believed that acknowledging differences and accepting responsibility for maintaining open communication, women would be able to foster an environment in which oppression in

any form would be intolerable. Spender (1980) added that by turning towards each other (rather than men) for confirmation, women could generate and make explicit their own values (p. 4).

I aimed to facilitate solidarity amongst the participants and myself by valuing their insights, criticisms, and clarifications of my work as women united in our cause to understand each other. By integrating theoretical postulates with the participants' narratives, we were able to engage in a dialogue about my interpretations and discuss the theories that informed my interpretations. This also helped to elucidate new and sometimes contradictory statements that made up our experiences as 'women' and provoked new ideas about our oppression and the meaning of feminist alignment.

I chose to work with women despite post-structural critiques of reliance on gendered categories. In keeping with Irigaray (1985), women's experiences provide a unique window into the denigrating effects of a system that is patriarchal because women as a group have suffered because of this designation. I believed that it was important to promote women's experiences because they have largely been ignored. I also believed that exploration of women's experiences provided insight into the very real effects of designations that are neither essential or necessary, all of which was in keeping with a feminist post-structural agenda (Butler, 1990).

Hermeneutic inquiry: adapting hermeneutic investigation to the tenets of feminist post structural approach

Because I strove to uncover patriarchal motives and explore cultural prescriptions that have been covered over, I adopted a hermeneutic inquiry that was informed by tenets of feminist post-structural theory. According to Butler (1990) feminist methodology is "necessarily interpretive" because the motive of patriarchy is performed and reiterated by a continual denial of this performance (p. 32). Hermeneutic inquiry provided the means to explore cultural power dynamics by valorizing that which was not explicit, but was implied when accounting for meaning (Gergen, 1989. p. 242). Gergen (1989) proposed

that all interpretive studies are exercises in “cultural presuppositions” because we “cannot determine in any independent fashion how the covert is related to the overt, [or] how the signifiers are related to the signified” (p. 242). Hermeneutic inquiry was ideal for this study because I was able to flesh out the cultural presuppositions that informed our individual narratives as women.

I did not intend to uncover particular structures or essential aspects of the phenomenon of gender through a hermeneutic analysis. Instead, I used a hermeneutic approach to analyze the dialogue in an effort to link our perspectives to the patriarchal context from which they unfolded. In keeping with the hermeneutic approach of Dilthey (1900/1976) I tried to elucidate a clearer understanding of the participants and the larger culture but did not intend to explain the phenomenon.

I was able to uncover two particular performances of patriarchy or what Gadamer called a “horizon of understanding” (Gergen, 1989, p. 242). I situated the participants’ experiences as women living within a patriarchal system by highlighting the implicit and explicit links between their experiences and theories that conceptualize the current system as patriarchal. I emphasized that the understandings gained from this study were temporal and situational and were not meant to be, what Butler called, a “totalizing discourse” (p. 35). Although I encouraged participants to think about their experiences of oppression due to their designation as women, I also remained open to divergent narratives that participants used to situate themselves as individuals.

I hope that this empirical account showed that there was room for change as we move away from accounts that constrict the plurality of human experience by claiming to uncover essential structures of human experience. I wanted to be clear about my intention to promote patriarchy as a dialectic of silence that has oppressed women because this intention shaped the interpretations that I made when looking at participants’ dialogue.

Guiding principles outlined by feminist post-structural researchers

Feminist post-structural research calls for a relational versus objective approach to knowledge in an effort to contextualize the knowledge that emerges from empirical research (Lather, 1991, Butler, 1990, hooks, 1990, Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Because feminist post-structural theory is often criticized for being abstract and “elitist,” it was important to show that this body of theory is relevant to lived experience if studied with a relational methodology (hooks, 1990, p. 23). I believed that empirical research drawn from feminist post-structural accounts was particularly important because this promotes new possibilities for the construction of self and the assertion of agency within a culture that is currently oppressive.

In a literature review, Mauthner (1998) outlined the following principles for feminist research: reflexivity, attention to power relations, valorization of participants’ voices, recognition of the voice of the researcher and the emotions present throughout the research process (pp. 39-57). Although it is difficult to discuss one principle apart from the others, I will discuss each of these principles and the means from which I adapted my project accordingly.

The role of the researcher becomes central in a feminist post-structural analysis because this position retains the power to shape the meanings that emerge from the voices of the participants. According to Lather (1991) relevant feminist post-structural empirical work must be “selective, partial, and positioned” (p. 79). Reflexivity is a difficult and weighty task for the researcher who must constantly focus on power differences between s/he and the participants and the context from which the interactions emerge because these differences will influence what participants say and how their words are interpreted by the researcher. The role of the researcher is to go beyond the experience of the “researched” while maintaining the perspectivity of the participants and the perspective of her/himself (p. 74).

Lather (1991) highlighted the need to “correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position” (Lather, 1991, p. 71). Lather contended that the development of empowering research methodologies depended on “generating and refining more interactive, contextualized methods (p. 72). By valorizing situatedness, questions of power and the subsequent effects of power dynamics can be investigated and reappropriated accordingly. The researcher must be vigilant about her/his ability to replicate participants’ oppression since the researcher ultimately makes decisions about their treatment during the data collecting process as well as the resulting depictions.

Mauthner and Doucet (1998) explained that the path of the researcher can be explored by the decisions s/he makes as s/he moves from talk to text to theory, paying careful attention to the “detours, and shortcuts” at each stage of the research journey (p. 141). The point of data analysis is to learn something new from and about the data while respecting the idea that we learn more about the perspective of the researcher than we do about the perspective of those studied (p. 122). The attempt to “trace” the path of the researcher is crucial because this serves to valorize the perspectival nature of the understandings gained from research, while highlighting that no account is ever complete because what is “chosen” to “stand out” is as implicit as it is explicit” (p. 121).

I have documented my motivation for investigating women’s oppression throughout my literature review. In addition to this I kept what I termed a *contact and reflection log* (See Appendix A), when I interviewed my participants in an effort to keep a running account of feelings and ideas I had as I entered into, and then left interactions with each of the participants. I also documented reactions and reflections during the dialogue and added these and other insights into the data throughout the analyses of the project. I incorporated these reflections into the transcripts by posting them alongside our transcribed discourse, paying close attention to shifts in discourse that arose (See Appendix B for complete transcripts with researcher reflections in bold).

I disclosed my feminist post-structural ideology with participants because I was trying to disrupt hierarchical approaches to knowledge and interaction (See Appendix C for feminist identification speech located in the document that I termed the *interview checklist*). I knew that this agenda would influence the questions and interpretations that I imposed on the participants' dialogue and wanted to provide the participants with the opportunity to know and respond to this agenda. I also knew that they were likely to make assumptions about this stance and make decisions about disclosure accordingly. This disclosure and disruption of traditional researcher/participant roles provoked discussion about the feminist post-structural agenda, and allowed the participants and myself to engage in a meaningful dialogue that felt more authentic and less constricted by traditional balance of power-knowledge between the researcher and the researched.

Although I discussed my intentions and motivations openly, I was also careful about saying too much, for fear that this would silence the participants. In an effort to strike a balance between disclosure and foreclosure, I tended to be more disclosive during the second and third interviews than during the first interview. While I disclosed my feminist stance before we began our dialogue during the first interview, I tended to be more descriptive and explicit about the ways that I conceptualized resistance to the mechanisms of oppression. I felt that this disclosure was more appropriate during the second and third meetings because the participants were exposed to the theories that I used as they reviewed their individualized narratives.

Miller (1998) emphasized the importance of striking a balance between self-disclosure on the part of the researcher and providing participants with enough room to discuss their own views (p. 62). For example, although I was focused on narratives of oppression, I encouraged participants to talk about experiences in which they felt empowered by their gendered marking. I wanted to promote and preserve the plurality that shapes our experiences, while also providing participants with the opportunity to talk

about conceptualizations of gendered marking that were different from feminist post-structural accounts.

Instead of posing my perspective as the only possible interpretation, I met with the participants after I analyzed their dialogue with the intention of documenting their feedback about my interpretations (see Appendixes D and E for complete interview notes). I did not do this to validate the interpretations, because this would suggest that there was a singular meaning that arose from dialogue. Instead, I showed the participants that their voices were valued, while also highlighting the idea that the research should be accessible to those who are studied.

I did not believe that offering the participants a chance to comment on my interpretations would equalize the power dynamics of our relationship. As the primary researcher, I retained the power to shape the meanings that emerged in this study in a way that the participants did not. Participants were likely to have feelings and experiences that they did not share because of my status as a stranger, and the meanings that they may have associated with my position as a Ph.D. candidate. I tried to ensure that each participant understood the ramifications of participating in the research project by explaining their rights as participants while also clarifying that their feedback may not result in an altering of their narrative if the concern was theoretical and not a matter of personal discomfort.

My intention was to preserve plurality of voice, not to enact a relativist stance that equalized all views. I have posed the context from which participants' lived experiences emerged as patriarchal, and thus used my knowledge of feminist post-structural accounts to highlight the influence of this context. Because I was not necessarily interested in how much participants agreed with or knew about feminist post-structural theories, but was interested in investigating how the patriarchal context effected their lives, I hoped that this power difference did not devalue their voices. I was explicit about my intention to differentially change my interpretations with the participants. I also documented the

feedback offered by the participants to preserve their voices and ensure that the reader has an opportunity to make her/his own judgments.

Although feminist post-structural research emphasizes the importance of reflection on the part of the researcher, there is also recognition that the reflective capacity of the researcher is limited (Mauthner, & Doucet, 1998, and Lather, 1991). Researchers must emphasize that projects are never complete, since knowledge shifts and changes with time, context and with people. As such, I preserved as much of my reflections and feedback offered by participants that I was conscious of, with the recognition that much was left out. I do hope that careful documentation will allow other readers to see alternate interpretations and issues that I did not articulate.

In addition to gathering anecdotes about participants' experiences and linking them to feminist post-structural ideas, our dialogue about gender disrupted apathy amongst ourselves. I explored how women in a gender-focused course changed their beliefs about gender and their experience as women. I was able to see how the participant's incorporated their experiences of participating in a gender-focused course, while also reflecting on the research experiences and the effects of our dialogue. These interactions helped all of us to gain insight about our experiences as women and disrupted apathetic feelings about our current place within society.

PROCEDURE

Participants and Setting

The two female participants of this study agreed to participate after seeing the poster (See Appendix F) that was hung at their respective job sites by an acquaintance of this researcher.

The names ‘Ann’ and ‘Samantha’ were chosen based on their similarity to the participants’ real names. I felt it was important to try to capture some sort of likeness to the real names because of my goal to highlight the unique qualities that each participant contributed. The fact that the names are not real, however, also conveys the fact that the individualized accounts that emerged were fictive and not meant to stand as ‘Real’ but instead as representations of the participants at a particular place, time, and context.

The participant who I have named ‘Ann’ identified as a 45 year old master’s level social worker, who saw herself as Caucasian and Italian, a non-practicing spiritual person who was raised Catholic and later identified herself as a lesbian woman in a committed relationship.

The participant who I have named ‘Samantha’ identified as a 27 year old, African American master’s level social worker who identified as a practicing Roman Catholic woman who was straight and in a committed relationship.

I, as the ‘Researcher’ was a 29 year old Caucasian, married, straight woman nearing the end of my fifth year as a doctorate student in clinical psychology who worked as a therapist, and identified as a relatively spiritual and practicing Jew.

I contacted the two women who responded to the posted flyers and proceeded to set an interview date, time, and place. I met with the participants separately, at mutually agreed upon settings, both of which happened to be at the participant’s respective offices of employment. I met with each participant for two face to face interviews that each lasted approximately an hour and a half. I also spoke with each participant over the phone

to review the preliminarily “final” accounts. These third and final contacts lasted approximately half an hour with each participant.

Praxis

The posted advertisement (See Appendix F) was explicit about the requirements, namely identification as a woman and participation (past or present) in a gender course, while also detailing the commitment to participating in two hour long face to face interviews and one phone conversation. Gender was named as the explicit topic of the study with the goal of connecting women’s lived experiences to feminist awareness also noted. I requested that potential participants contact me via phone or email.

Following a review of issues involved in participation in a research project: ie. risks and benefits, time commitments etc. and subsequent signing of consent forms (See Appendix G), I began the first interview by asking participants to tell me of experiences in which their gender became an issue, including but not limited to experiences that occurred while participating in the gender focused course. I attempted to gain a balanced account that included directive questions about the dimensions of gendered experience/gendered awareness that I was interested in, while also following each participant's dialogue. I was able to elicit personal narratives, with positive and negative reflections about gendered experience evident, even though the focus remained narratives of gendered oppression (See Appendix I for complete individual accounts).

Questions that were posed to the participants during each of the two face to face interviews varied upon the flow of each conversation, and the narratives told by each participant. The main topics that framed my agenda were as follows:

1. Participants’ experiences when gender was an issue. Experiences when the participants were most aware of their gender (including but not limited to experiences that have related to participating in the gender-focused course).
2. Problematic and/or affirming statements about these experiences, and why.

3. I wanted to know how the participants were effected when their gender was highlighted as an issue.
4. Issues that provoked participant's decision to participate in a gender-focused course as well as the interest in this study.
5. I wanted to know if the gender focused course had an effect on participant's view of gender issues.
6. I asked both participants if they considered themselves a feminist, and we explored the reasons for this identification or lack thereof.

Following the first interview, I transcribed the dialogue (See Appendix B), analyzed the transcripts implementing the five reading approach (See Appendix H for complete analysis), and developed drafts of the individual accounts to be reviewed by the participants during the second meeting. The second interviews occurred approximately a month after the first interviews.

During the second meeting we reviewed my interpretations, and I encouraged participants to give feedback about them. This session was also audio-taped, but was not transcribed. Instead, tapes were reviewed and notes were derived (See Appendix D). Each participant was offered the transcript of our initial dialogue, the five readings, and preliminary individual accounts that summarized the interpretations and main points arrived at through the five readings. The participants also had access to my journal notes, since they were displayed alongside the transcription of our previous dialogue.

I encouraged the participants to make sense of this data, and queried them for feedback about the interpretations that I made. We focused on the preliminary narratives since this seemed to be of the most interest to the participants. The participants were also provided copies of the transcript and the individualized narratives at the end of the last two meetings. The participants only had access to their individual dialogues with me and not to dialogues that occurred with the other participant. Identifying information was

removed from each transcript and audio-taped, following the first and second sessions in an effort to maintain confidentiality.

At the conclusion of the second meeting, arrangements for final feedback sessions were made. I sent the revised individualized accounts to the participants and arranged for a final phone contact to ensure that participants felt comfortable with the resulting narratives (See Appendix E for complete third session notes). Participants' concerns were reflected in the data, and I ensured that each participant had the necessary information to gain access to the completed dissertation.

ANALYSIS

I began the analysis by transcribing the audio-taped first interviews while also including my reflections that I had as I conducted the interview and developed the transcripts. I read with attention to five different lenses devised by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) and Lather (1991) in an effort to address the main issues that I wanted to study (see Appendix H for complete analysis). The main lenses were as follows: basic plot of the participants' stories, participants' and my views of ourselves, interpersonal relationships in process (including interaction with this researcher), links to cultural contexts particularly issues that were relevant to feminist post-structural theory, and power dynamics within the study.

First Reading

For the initial reading I looked for themes and repetitive concepts that helped me to construct a general sense of what each participant experienced as a woman and her views of women's oppression. I focused specifically on main events, characters, recurrent themes, words, metaphors, and contradictions of the participant's dialogue with this researcher (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, pp. 126-129). I submitted my dialogue to the same lens to construct a reflective narrative of my own views about women and included these reflections in the analysis. This reading helped provide a general synopsis of the interaction that unfolded with each participant for subsequent meetings.

Second Reading

In my second reading I focused on what Mauthner and Doucet (1998), called the "voice of I" in an effort to see how I as the researcher and the participant spoke of our selves (p. 130). I focused on self referral statements, such as, but not limited to, our use

of the word "I." This reading highlighted the effects related to patriarchy's discourse about women while also lending focus to racial, sexual identity, and any other markers typically associated with identity. In addition to making a link to feminist post-structural theories I wanted to pay close attention to the meanings about the self that arise through dialogue.

Third Reading

In the third reading I focused on the process of the interaction that occurred between each participant and myself. The process level of our dialogue evoked issues related to power. I paid close attention to direct and indirect references to the difference in power between us, shifts in the dialogue related to choices of topics, vocabulary, and any other elements that occurred in the interactions. This reading contextualized the premises from which the interactions occurred.

Fourth Reading

During the fourth reading, I highlighted any overt references to a larger cultural context made by the participants and myself. I linked these references along with other implicit references, to the feminist post-structural theories that I reviewed in the literature review. I looked for discourse about gendered limitations, issues of devaluation, feelings of inadequacy, apathetic responses to collective feminist action, and difficulties locating patriarchal agendas/dynamics because they have been covered over. I also looked for discourse that did not correspond to the feminist post-structural accounts that I have chosen to focus on, although this account was less thorough given my alignment with feminist post-structural theory.

Fifth Reading

Following the initial interview and the subsequent four readings of each transcript I used Lather's (1991) questions to evaluate the degree to which I was able to replicate tenets posed by feminist post-structural researchers (p. 84). I did this before meeting the participants a second time in an effort to change my approach as needed.

- * Did I encourage ambivalence, ambiguity and multiplicity, or did I impose order and structure?
- * What elements of legislation and prescription underlie my efforts?
- * Did I create a text that was multiple without being paralyzed?
- * Have I questioned the textual staging of knowledge in a way that keeps my own authority from being reified?
- * Who are my 'Others'?
- * What binaries structured my arguments?
- * Did my work multiply political spaces and prevent the concentration of power in any one point?
- * Did it go beyond critique to help in producing pluralized and diverse spaces for the emergence of subjugated knowledges and for the organization of resistance?

Developing individualized accounts

Following the five reading analyses I developed preliminary individualized accounts that were reviewed by the participants during our second and third meetings. I wanted to valorize individual voices that emerged in shared contexts by not comparing the participant's accounts to one another. Like Mauthner and Doucet (1998) I also wanted

to avoid creating a hierarchical system of analysis by not prioritizing one reading over another. Each account was shaped according the flow of each of the participant's dialogue and developed from the insights gathered from the five readings (see Appendix I for complete accounts).

The accounts were written in a paragraph style in an effort to lend clarity to the analysis without losing complexity. These resulting narratives were then used as a means to dialogue with the participants about my interpretations of their personal stories and introduce feminist post-structural ideas. The preliminary individualized accounts were revised following the second meeting and the third telephone conversation.

Summarized results

Since participants' dialogues also shed light on ways that future researchers and resistance advocates could approach gender, an unanticipated analysis was developed post hoc. It became clear after analyzing the dialogue and discussing the individualized accounts with my participants and dissertation committee that this study had implications that could be summarized and clarified if put in a more concise format than the individualized accounts.

In an effort to clarify the implications of the present study I returned to the five reading analysis and individualized accounts to look for general issues that could have implications for future research. Two main issues became explicit throughout this review. First, the ways that I approached participants about gendered identity impacted the way that they talked about and conceptualized gendered and other kinds of identities. Researcher interventions were as much a part of results as the results that emerged in

response to these interventions. As such, I chose to highlight the perspectivity of the current study by using my interventions and participant responses as the results.

I returned to the five reading analyses and individualized accounts to find ways that my interventions affected participants' responses. Participants' vulnerability as well as their empowerment showed through depending on the ways that we approached each other. Participants' responses to my interventions as the researcher were then summarized and listed temporally as they corresponded to the interventions (see Table 2).

A second set of results emerged when I considered that the issues raised while in dialogue with participants went beyond methodological considerations to implications for political resistance. Our dialogue provided a means to tease out places where gender was reified and places where this reification could be disrupted through interventions in academic and/or political forums (see Table 3).

Table 1 shows the summarized steps of analysis.

Table 1

Summarized Steps of Analysis

Steps	Description
Interviewed participants	Asked participants to describe times when gender became an issue.
Transcribed interviews	Typed out dialogue including my reflections as the researcher both during and after interviews.
Analyzed transcripts	Read for basic content, plot, characters, etc. Read for the voice of I. Read with attention to the process level of our interactions. Read for cultural connections. Read to uncover hierarchical constructions within the study.
Developed individualized accounts	Developed preliminary individualized accounts derived from five reading analyses for each participant.
Second interview	Reviewed preliminary individualized accounts with participants and requested feedback about interpretations made by this researcher.
Integrated second interview notes	Integrated reflections made by each of the participants with particular attention to feelings and thoughts about the existing interpretations.

Table 1 (continued).

<u>Steps</u>	<u>Description</u>
Sent revised accounts	Sent each participant the individualized accounts that reflected the changes made during the second interview.
Third interview	Called each participant to request feedback about revised individualized accounts and notified them how to access the final draft of the dissertation.
Integrated third interview notes	Integrated final feedback offered by participants into the individualized accounts.
Summarized results	Reviewed 5 reading analyses and individualized accounts to tease out methodological interventions and insights that had implications for future projects.

RESULTS

Rather than including all of the results from each of the analyses, I selected samples from each of the five readings, and the individualized accounts. These samples were selected on the basis of the elucidation they lent to the phenomenon of gendered identity. Following these analyses it became clear that the issues highlighted in the individualized accounts could be summarized into a more concise narrative.

I revisited the five reading analyses and the two individual accounts looking for anything that clarified how the phenomenon of gendered identity was disclosed by the participants. My interventions seemed necessary to encourage participants to discuss the oppressive aspects of gendered identity in a way that has not been captured by objective methods. Therefore it became imperative to explore how my actions were employed toward this end. This exploration resulted in a set of themes pertaining to my method.

Due in part to this method, participants' disclosures elucidated how the dominant patriarchal discourse obfuscated gendered identity. In keeping with the present goal of making gender-based oppression explicit, it seemed equally pertinent to derive a second set of themes that clarified the meanings that gendered identity had for participants.

Following brief descriptions and subsequent excerpts of each of the analyses, the summarized results are presented in Tables 2 and 3. These findings will be addressed in greater depth in the Discussion section.

Excerpts from the five reading analyses

Reading 1: reading for elements of plot, characters, recurrent images, words, metaphors and/or contradictions

Addressing gender evoked stories of parental influence, career choice, sexual identification, race, family dynamics, and romantic relationships, among other topics. Themes centered on the seemingly arbitrary limits placed on groups identified as different. Though only one participant spoke about women's gender as an inherently oppressive marker, both participants agreed that women are oppressed by the patriarchal system. Though both participants believed gender differences were biologically determined, they considered feminist post-structural conceptions of gender because they agreed this was less restrictive.

I chose the following example because it shows that gender was recognized as a marker that garnered discrimination, but was not necessarily identified with oppression. According to Williams and Wittig (1997), this is a common characterization of gender issues that hinders current activism against the discrimination women face.

First reading example: gender-focused course

'Samantha' was drawn to the gender-focused course because it was "small" (line 59) and she thought it would be "interesting" (lines 61-68), "something new to learn" (line 64). 'Samantha' was not drawn to the course because she identified gender as a marker of discrimination. In 'Samantha's' words, "[Gender] was something I had never focused on because most of the time I would go towards/.../um classes to do with race and religion but I never looked at gender" (lines 66-67). When asked if the course changed the way she looked at her gendered identity, 'Samantha' said it did, since she

“never really thought anything about the way that women are perceived and things like that” (lines 122-123).

Later in the interview, ‘Samantha’ noted that she became aware of gender issues in college when friends’ gender role expectations differed from her own. Despite this realization, ‘Samantha’ remained hesitant to equate gender issues with oppression throughout our interviews.

Reading 2: reading for the voice of “I,” or the ways in which we spoke about ourselves

Throughout the course of the interviews, ambivalence about gender oppression and our subsequent internalization of this oppression was evident. The following example from the second reading highlighted this ambivalence.

Second reading example: carefully avoiding disdain

‘Ann’ felt the need to be careful, as both a woman and a lesbian, in jobs and social arenas (lines 445-448). She accepted that her identity might make others “feel uncomfortable” (including this researcher), but agreed that it “stinks” (line 479). ‘Ann’ was apologetic about her “discomfort for others’ disdain” (line 468) and seemed to feel disempowered. She also sounded apathetic and hopeless as she accepted that she had to remain quiet about many aspects of herself as a consequence of her difference.

Reading 3: reading for the interpersonal process of the interactions between the participants and the researcher

This reading was critical because I was forced to attend to power dynamics within the interviews and during analysis. Presenting these insights to participants led to some of the most interesting dialogues because we confronted our differences in privilege due

to prescribed roles within the project, as well as those decreed by racial, and sexual identifications.

I selected the following example because it allowed ‘Samantha’ and I to confront the differences in our racial designations and subsequent differences in privilege. The ensuing discussion helped me to better understand that the privileges afforded me by my racial marker led me to prioritize gender over other identity markers. Although I did not want to promote a hierarchically structured explication of gender, I did so by assuming that gendered oppression should be equated with other experiences of oppression.

Third reading example: catching sight of ourselves and our expectations

‘Samantha’ acknowledged our differences in racial designation only after I confronted her. She described herself as having two marks of oppression, and being at the “bottom of the barrel” as a result. She said others often expressed doubt about her abilities because of racist beliefs. When explaining her lack of attention to gender issues during the second interview, ‘Samantha’ commented that people saw her as “black first and then as a woman.”

Reading 4: reading for references to larger cultural contexts, including, but not limited to, connection and disconnection from feminist post-structural accounts

The fourth reading helped me seek places to link feminist post-structural claims of patriarchal oppression to participants’ experiences. What I had not anticipated were the endorsements and insights the participants reported as a result of this integration. The following example stood out because the participant gained insight and validation for her experience even though she did not interpret the theory as it was intended.

Fourth reading example: stories of melancholia

‘Ann’ strongly endorsed Butler’s (1997), theory of gendered identification during our second interview. Butler argued that by virtue of accepting dichotomized gender identification, we are forced to deny or repress the loss of other possibilities, particularly homosexual attachments/identifications. ‘Ann’ endorsed Butler’s theory that “panic” resulted when a woman questioned her heterosexual identity because it meant she was losing her “femininity” and becoming “monstrous” (pp. 135-6). ‘Ann’ related a story of fear from the time she began to consider homosexual identification. She feared she would reveal this identity to her straight roommate by talking in her sleep, and this revelation would result in rejection.

Reading 5: reading for the voice of hierarchy and evaluating the totalizing claims of this study

Rather than trying to eradicate power dynamics, my goal was to ensure they were explicit whenever possible. This reading was relevant during the interview process because it helped me to adjust my approach to the participants, while it also pointed towards issues that could be amended in future projects. I chose an example that showed how my agendas or prescriptions became oppressive.

Fifth reading example: feminists as bra burners

‘Samantha’ did not align herself with the feminist agenda because she said she did not have enough information to make an informed decision. I was not convinced that this was ‘Samantha’s’ reason for not identifying with feminism, and interpreted ‘Samantha’s’ claim as a contradiction to other issues she raised. What I did not interpret was my desire

or ability to silence a stance in opposition to my own. In this way, I played into a totalizing discourse that covered my potential to oppress.

Individualized accounts: the means to dialogue with participants

I derived individualized accounts from the insights gathered from the five reading analyses for each participant. I revised these accounts twice in accordance with participants' feedback during the second and third meetings (the third "meeting" occurred over the telephone). I did this in an effort to provide participants with the opportunity to offer feedback on the way their dialogues were interpreted. In addition, the study took on an unanticipated pedagogical character when participants shared insights they attributed to the feminist post-structuralist theories I incorporated into their stories.

Although the individualized accounts were originally meant to be included in this section in their entirety they were moved to the Appendix for the sake of clarity. I made this decision because the accounts did not clearly address the effects that the method had on participants nor did they clearly represent implications the participants' insights showed about gendered identity and the ways this identity could be disrupted.

Despite this change, the individualized accounts served as results in the sense that they provided a means to dialogue with participants. They also served as examples of the kinds of experiences that two participants faced within a patriarchal culture. Although the accounts showed as much about my views as those of the two participants, I believe they remain important to review because they represent the experience of gendered identity in a way that a list of insights cannot. I chose the following excerpt because it captured some of the difficulty we faced in our attempts to resist the patriarchal discourse.

Excerpt from ‘Ann’s’ individualized account: blaming ourselves

During the first interview, I misinterpreted ‘Ann’s’ sarcasm about accepting men’s lack of support for Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered (LGBT) and/or women’s issues as a sign of shame. I assumed ‘Ann’ internalized the shame of her sexuality as a consequence of being a part of heterosexualized/patriarchal discourse. During the second interview, however, ‘Ann’ clarified that sarcasm was her way to voice anger toward those who dismissed gender issues.

By assuming that ‘Ann’ accepted the discourse of patriarchy, I was assuming a hierarchical relationship with her. In effect I mistook her sarcasm as a sign that she was not as aware of the damaging effects she suffered. In essence, I silenced the ambiguity of her statements and replaced the multiplicity with a singular answer.

Although it was important for ‘Ann’ and I to clarify and reflect on our own inability to escape the patriarchal discourse, it was also important to catch sight of our continuously critical self-reflections. Instead of focusing on mechanisms of oppression, like the government or language, ‘Ann’ and I spent more time criticizing ourselves and worrying about the unfolding of our narrative and the relevance it would hold. Our difficulty escaping a self-blaming narrative fit with Irigaray’s (1985) theory that women mimicked a language and cultural narrative that they did not produce.

‘Ann’ repeatedly expressed concern about providing repetitive and irrelevant information during both interviews. Despite my attempts to discourage this doubt, ‘Ann’ continued to express uncertainty before sharing her thoughts. It was similarly difficult for me to feel confident about my disclosures during the interviews and the analysis. I was

afraid of becoming too directive, and feared that a lack of disclosure on my part would promote hierarchical relationships between participants and myself in our research roles.

I chose to be more forthcoming about my feminist post-structural views during my second interview with ‘Ann’ because I did not want to lose the possibility of enacting a pedagogical stance that could provide validation and support in place of inaction. Instead of promoting biological difference theories by remaining silent and documenting participants’ views, I felt it was more important to provide participants with insights gained from my exposure to feminist post-structural theories and, in effect, disrupt the silence of patriarchal agendas.

Results summary: impacting gendered identity through empirical implementation of
feminist post-structural theory

To summarize the results in a more concise format without losing the complexity of participants’ contributions, I returned to the five reading analyses and the individualized accounts to see if there was a way to summarize the main issues addressed. This review led me to two separate, though interconnected sets of data.

The first set of data thematizes the participants’ responses to the pedagogical method. Since I wanted to show a new way to study gendered identity it seemed relevant to summarize the effects of the pedagogical interventions. Following a narrative of the results, this set of data is presented in two columns with my interventions on one side of a table and the participants’ responses on the other. I listed these interventions and responses temporally as they occurred in the procedural application.

I decided a second set of data was needed because the participants did more than respond to the method. In addition, participants shed light on the ways that patriarchal

discourse disclosed gender identity. To make this dynamic more explicit in my results, I decided to thematize the meanings of gender identity that were reflected in participants' (including this researcher) dialogue. Following a narrative description, these results are presented in two columns with one side of the table listing issues raised in the dialogue and the other side listing interpretations of the dialogue. Interpretations showed the ways that patriarchal agendas impacted our dialogue, while also thematizing ways that these same disclosures could be used to fight against patriarchal prescriptions. The order of presentation corresponds to the change in attitudes of the participants. Since participants spoke more about making positive changes by the end of the project, I decided to end with results that were reticent with implications for resistance strategies.

Results summary part one: impact of the feminist post-structural method

Selecting women to participate in the current study had implications for the project as well as the participants. Although the decision to use gendered markings as the basis for selection was controversial from a feminist post-structural standpoint, it seemed relevant to focus on those who had been most oppressed by the patriarchal system given the limited scope of the project. The enjoyment and insight participants gained as a result of this project gave me confidence that this was a good decision. By focusing on gender issues, both participants reported an increased awareness of the ways they were impacted by this marker historically and in present relationships, which helped them to feel more empowered.

Participants connected gendered identity to other identity markers, particularly those that were marginalized. Since these connections occurred spontaneously for both participants and was unanticipated by this researcher, the only link to the method was the

openness of the dialogue. Participants' disclosures called attention to the importance of leaving room for participants to share their views instead of constricting the range of topics.

Participants focused on experiences of gender discrimination after I disclosed my feminist agenda. By focusing on negative experiences, participants recognized that they were more impacted by this designation in public domains such as work and in private familial and romantic relationships than they originally anticipated. These insights helped participants to relate their experiences to gender stereotypes and/or prescriptions dictated by the larger cultural discourse. As a result they also became more aware of the ways that our common discourse and media outlets effectively created this oppression. This was significant because it helped participants to gain distance from discourse that blames the oppressed by covering the means of oppression.

Prioritizing my agenda to participants' disclosures was a necessary consequence to uncover the ways that they were affected by the patriarchal discourse. Focusing on experiences when they were oppressed helped them gain insight into the ways that they experienced and then dismissed oppression. Since both participants were not always aware of the ways they were oppressed, this might not have emerged as a descriptor of gendered identity in the absence of a pedagogical intervention. Although this would not be an accurate description of gender, it would have cast gender as a neutral identification, and as a result contributed to misconceptions of gendered and otherwise marked identities.

Participants showed that they often took discriminatory practices for granted. This apathy gave way when they reconsidered their own experiences and recognized how

often identity prescriptions affected them and others within the current cultural discourse. By the end of the project both participants endorsed feminist post-structural theories that called for the abandonment of gendered categories. Even though both participants expressed doubt about whether others would do the same, they agreed the current system was detrimental.

Participants' attitudes and subsequent reports about gendered identity changed after reflection and exposure to feminist post-structural theories. Designing interventions such as revealing my feminist agenda, asking participants to focus on experiences of oppression, and exposing them to critical theory disrupted their apathy and exposed them to the ways they were oppressed. In the absence of pedagogical interventions, participants' descriptions of gender would have reflected the patriarchal discourse of neutrality and not their actual experiences.

I made process level interpretations because I also wanted to make the power dynamics that existed between participants and I explicit. Showing participants that I recognized the differences in privilege verbally and in written form helped us to make these dynamics part of our discourse. The fact that we were more inclined to confront each other about our differences in identities and roles within this project during the second and third interviews also suggested that meeting more than once helped all of us feel more comfortable making these confrontations.

Revealing my research agenda and requesting feedback about the process of the research throughout our interactions also showed participants that I recognized their vulnerability. Even though both participants minimized their vulnerability within the project, their disclosures suggested otherwise. Because I wanted to empower participants

despite my inability to equalize our roles within the project, I prioritized participants' feedback in the analysis phase and granted them final word as to what would be reflected in their accounts.

Participants' decisions to reveal personal experiences and confront my biases (particularly my privileging of gender to other markers) suggested that they felt some level of safety within the project. By including participants' feedback in my analysis I was able to show participants' views in a way that supported my theory while also being careful not to silence their views.

Exposing participants to feminist post-structural theories during the second and third meetings helped them to recognize that identity markers, particularly gender, could be conceptualized in a way that was not based in immutable terms. Participants recognized their own experiences within the theoretical postulates and reported feeling validated when their thoughts fit with a recognized body of academic work. Thematizing patriarchal prescriptions for gender (as is typical for feminist post-structural theory) even helped one participant catch sight of the ways that she and her boyfriend played out stereotypical roles with little to no awareness. In a later interview, this same participant happily reported that this insight helped her to explore this issue with her boyfriend.

Throughout our interactions, participants' became less apathetic about the discrimination they faced in the patriarchal system. As discussion continued participants were more accepting of connections between gender and oppression, with one participant becoming more connected with her long history of activism.

The following table (Table 2) presents a list of interventions and the subsequent impact that the interventions had on participants. The interventions are listed in the

temporal order that they occurred throughout the procedure. I hope that it is clear that these interventions can be adapted and used in future projects while also highlighting the fact that these results are more representative of my agenda than they are of participants' views.

Table 2

Feminist post-structurally-informed interventions and their impact on participants

Feminist post-structural intervention	Participant impact
<p>1.*Gendered identity was used to select participants</p>	<p>*Participants felt validated by feminist post-structural principles.</p> <p>*Women's voices were valorized.</p> <p>*Participants gained insight about their gendered identification as women.</p> <p>*Women's stories were preserved in the individualized accounts.</p>
<p>2. *Gendered identity was the focus of an open-ended dialogue with participants who experienced oppression.</p>	<p>*Participants were vulnerable in their roles as participants.</p> <p>*The lesbian identified and black identified participants shared their personal experiences of oppression and expressed gratitude for the empowerment they felt as a result of our dialogues.</p>

Table 2 (continued)

Feminist post-structural intervention	Participant impact
<p>3. *Revealed my feminist agenda.</p> <p>*Asked participants to focus on experiences when gender was an issue.</p> <p>*Participants were exposed to feminist post-structural theory.</p>	<p>*Participants assumed I was looking for instances when they experienced gender negatively.</p> <p>*Reflection on gendered oppression helped participants recognize larger cultural dynamics of oppression, as well as personal experiences of discrimination.</p>
<p>4. * Gendered identity was introduced as an identity of patriarchal construction.</p>	<p>*Participants recognized implicit power dynamics inherent to this and other identity designations.</p> <p>*Researcher's agenda took precedence over participants' disclosures.</p>
<p>5. *Power dynamics between participants and researcher were used as a means to dialogue about privilege.</p>	<p>* Differences in privilege created tensions between researcher and participants. (continued)</p>

Table 2 (continued)

Feminist post-structural intervention	Participant impact
5. * (continued)	<p>*The lesbian identified participant felt vulnerable disclosing information to this researcher, whom she assumed was straight and had an undisclosed agenda.</p> <p>*The black identified participant voiced disagreement about my equation of gender with oppression on the basis that racial identification carried more discriminatory consequences for her.</p>
<p>6. *Pedagogical approach to participants allowed this researcher to introduce feminist post-structural theories.</p>	<p>*Participants felt validated.</p> <p>*Participants gained a new way to conceptualize gender that was less oppressive.</p> <p>*One participant changed her romantic relationship due to new insights. (continued)</p>

Table 2 (continued)

Feminist post-structural intervention	Participant impact
6.* (continued)	<p>*Participants' views of gendered identity changed during project.</p> <p>*Participants were less apathetic about gender as we continued to meet and discuss gender and other identity markers.</p>
<p>7.*Participants did not discuss patriarchal power dynamics until researcher exposed them to feminist post-structural theories of oppression.</p>	<p>*Participants attributed oppression to individual biases.</p> <p>* Oppressive circumstances seemed unchangeable, unable to be located on a large scale.</p>

Results summary part two: gendered identity as it is lived within the patriarchal discourse

A second set of data emerged as I returned to the analyses and found that dialogue with participants continually pointed to ways in which gendered identity was reified by a naturalistic discourse. Since the first set of data focused on new ways to study gendered identity it seemed relevant to showcase new meanings about gendered identity that emerged as a result of these interventions. The dialogue between participants and I often hinted towards issues, attitudes, and beliefs that hindered our recognition of the more fluid aspects of gender and other identities. Since I interpreted these hindrances as signs of the patriarchal agenda I felt it was important to highlight these hindrances and make them and the subsequent effects explicit.

One of the most obvious ways that participants and I were impacted by patriarchy was shown in our ambivalence about characterizing female identity as oppressive. For example, even though both participants readily spoke about oppressive experiences in which they felt discriminated against because of their gender, race, or sexual identification neither participant chose to participate in this project because of a desire to fight against this oppression. Even though both women identified oppressive experiences readily, neither was particularly disturbed by the system that dictated these experiences. I took this reaction as a sign that apathy plagued the cultural discourse about gender and other identity markers.

In keeping with this apathy was a lack of hope for positive changes. Participants did not expect men to identify with gender issues and nor did they believe that people would be willing to resist the current system. Similarly, one participant was even hesitant

to link gender with oppression because for fear this would detract from racial discrimination.

Despite their awareness of the oppression of groups marked by any marker that was not male, white, straight, and at least middle class, participants did not speak about power agendas when they discussed oppression of marginalized groups. Instead, participants attributed these experiences to either personal characteristics or did not mention any system of power at all. Since this lack of recognition of power dynamics was easily changed when they were exposed theories that said otherwise, I concluded that patriarchy often covered over the means that created oppression. By making the implicit agendas of patriarchy explicit, the silence that surrounded discrimination was disrupted and participants voiced their oppression.

Although participants lived gender, race, and other identities as inherently connected, their discourse of separation suggested otherwise. Gendered-racialized-sexualized identities were lived out as an integrated identity, as a place from which participants made decisions, connected with others, and defined themselves. Since the separation between identity markers was only relevant when they became a means to discriminate, I interpreted this separation as a sign of the patriarchal discourse.

When one marker was separated from another, this marker was prioritized in a way that minimized or covered over the intersections between the other identity markers. Signifying identities as separate realities serves to categorize people. This categorization is particularly dangerous within patriarchal discourse since the primary means to interpret rankings is hierarchical. For example, participant 'Samantha' was hesitant to identify

with gendered oppression because she feared that this identification would minimize issues she faced as a black woman.

From this finding it also followed that no identity marker could be studied without implicating others. Participants' dialogue showed that race, class, sexual identification, and other markers also contributed to experiences when gender became an issue. As a result, I needed to catch sight of the ways that I unnecessarily limited the dialogue by posing gender as a separate identity. I tried to rectify this situation by including other identity markers when I addressed issues of marginalization. Accordingly, resistance movements need to find a way to prioritize the needs of all oppressed people without imposing a hierarchical rankings. Working together, resistance movements might develop a place of safety and unity that could promote change and therefore resist prescriptions of oppressive systems of identification.

In addition to supporting feminist post-structural insights about the implicit means that patriarchy uses to oppress, participants were able to show that their gendered, and otherwise marked identities were lived in a way that was dictated by life circumstances and not natural restrictions. In other words, participants' identities were more fluid than biological conceptualizations proclaim. For example, gendered identity did not preclude 'Samantha's' mother from being able to provide for her family after the death of her husband, even though this expectation was typically prescribed to a male identity. 'Ann's' sexual identification did not prevent her from resisting oppression even though this same identity was the basis of much discrimination.

What did restrict these women's choices was not biological but instead was the legislative, financial, and social hardships that they endured by being marked as less than.

The fact that restrictions did not stop these women from utilizing their abilities shows that these same identities were used as places of resistance. The implicit message to resistance movements is they need to find ways to make this fluidity explicit.

Participants and I were able to come up with many places from which these insights about the oppressive discourse could be made explicit. One of the places that both participants discussed was the familial environment. Both participants' mothers were role models who showed through actions and words the ways that gendered and racial prescriptions should be taken up. Political groups might benefit a great deal if they developed parenting forums that focused on modeling fluid identities.

Another place from which oppressive dynamics could be made explicit is in the classroom. Participants refuted my assumption that gender-focused coursework implied a feminist –informed curriculum. One of the participants could not define feminism and did not even connect gender with oppression. Even though she looked up to the teacher she identified as a feminist, she was not willing to take the risk to apply this term to herself. This implies that teachers who are aware of the need to provide politically relevant courses also need to attend to the power dynamics that created this need in the first place.

The real consequence of not highlighting power dynamics within a course curriculum was that it implied that the subjugated group was in some way to blame for their treatment. Blaming victims, no matter how implicit, was dangerous because it decreased participants' ability to recognize the roots of oppression. For example 'Samantha' was not supportive of women's rights, nor did she understand why racial groups tended to stay together while part of a larger group. Accordingly, 'Samantha'

missed out on a prime opportunity to learn more about the roots of this oppression and the means to resist it.

This finding points to the importance of using any forum as a place to potentially disrupt oppression. Since awareness and reflection emerged as the most relevant intervention of this research project, the same interventions need to be used in other forums. By adopting a pedagogical, instead of an objective stance, I was able to use some of my knowledge to help participants consider less oppressive ways to conceptualize their identities. Additionally, by allowing participants to guide our dialogues, I was able to gain a more complex understanding of the ways that we are all impacted by the larger cultural context. Participants and I were able engage in a dialogue about oppression that did not reify the context from which it emerged.

Participants and I were able to engage in a dialogue that was confrontational and rich with reflection. Participants reported feeling empowered by their participation in this project and in their gender-focused courses because these forums provided them with insight about themselves and the environment in which they lived. This also showed that research forums as well as academic forums could be used to disseminate and supplement awareness of oppression without sacrificing other goals.

Despite the positive effects gained through reflection, the current study was limited politically by not effecting larger scale changes. Since I did not assess participants' long term changes I can not even claim that they were affected significantly by their participation in this project. In spite of this limitation, I do think that the implicit message of this study was that feminist post-structural insights could be used to help people to distance themselves from identity conceptualizations that are unnecessarily

constricted. I also think that participants' willingness to consider alternate views of gender suggests that people might be less apathetic about resistance movements if they were able to recognize the ways that they were impacted by the currently patriarchal system.

The following table (Table 3) lists issues disclosed by participants about identity that was gendered, racialized, and sexualized by the patriarchal context. Like the previous table, one column of the table presented an issue raised in participants' dialogue and the corresponding column listed my interpretation of the implicit meaning that was disclosed about identity within a patriarchal discourse. Since much of the patriarchal discourse covers the oppressive aspects of gender, it seemed relevant to make this condition explicit while also clarifying ways that this oppression could be challenged. The issues addressed are presented temporally to represent the trend of participants' change in attitudes from a more apathetic stance to a position of more awareness where resistance strategies emerged. Again, I feel it is important to note that participants' responses were interpretations and as such were more representative of my perspective than that of participants.

Table 3

Participants (including researcher) disclosed gendered identity as a patriarchal designation

Participants' disclosure	Gendered identity within patriarchy
<p>1. * Neither participant chose this project, and only one selected a gender-focused course, because they were interested in gender-associated based discrimination.</p>	<p>*Apathy about gender-based discrimination hampers change/resistance.</p> <p>* Gender is not necessarily with oppression.</p> <p>*Gender issues are no longer of primary political concern.</p>
<p>2. * Participants did not speak about power agendas when they discussed oppression of marginalized groups.</p>	<p>* Oppression was attributed to individuals who were oppressed.</p> <p>*People need to be better informed about the oppressive agenda of the patriarchal discourse.</p>
<p>*3. Gendered identity was linked with race, sex, class identity markers.</p>	<p>*Identity markers cannot be studied without implicating others.</p> <p>*Resistance against one identity marker of oppression implies resistance of others. (continued)</p>

Table 3 (continued)

Participants' disclosure	Gendered identity within patriarchy
*3. (continued).	<p>*Patriarchal discourse poses identities as separate even though this separation was arbitrary and not reflective of lived experience.</p> <p>*Gendered identity and gendered stereotypes differed within cultural contexts of race, religion, and class.</p> <p>*Resistance movements should advocate for and seek support from each other rather than compete for attention.</p> <p>*Resistance movements need to prioritize the needs of the most severely oppressed without losing sight of more implicit types of oppression.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

Participants' disclosure	Gendered identity within patriarchy
<p>4. *Gendered identity became explicit in times of discrimination.</p>	<p>* Most oppression is implicit.</p> <p>*Resistance movements should focus on making gendered issues explicit.</p> <p>*Marginalized identities can be used as places of resistance.</p>
<p>5. * Life circumstances, and not gendered prescriptions, dictated participants' choices.</p>	<p>* Gender identity is more fluid than we are led to believe.</p> <p>*Fluidity of gendered identity is covered over by biological discourse.</p> <p>*Present assumptions about gender should be addressed, particularly showcasing the fallacies that are often overlooked and assumed to be real.</p>
<p>6. * Participants tended to interpret gender issues similarly to their mothers.</p>	<p>*Resistance movements should promote ways to provide parental guidance that would be less detrimental to identity development.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

Participants' disclosure	Gendered identity within patriarchy
<p>7.* Gender-focused academic courses did not necessarily focus on power dynamics that discriminated against women.</p>	<p>*Feminist agendas were misrepresented.</p> <p>*Negative and inaccurate stereotypes of feminism were endorsed.</p> <p>*Feminism continues to be plagued by negative stereotypes and this decreased participants' willingness to endorse feminist agendas.</p> <p>*Research projects and gender-focused courses can clarify feminist agendas and supplement awareness that is absent in other forums.</p>
<p>8. *Gender-focused courses did encourage participants to reflect on their gendered experience.</p>	<p>*Gender-focused courses can help oppressed groups to recognize their oppression.</p> <p>* Gender-focused courses provide forums that preserve and promote women's experiences.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

Participants' disclosure	Gendered identity within patriarchy
<p>9.* Gender-focused coursework was secondary to insight gained through political action.</p>	<p>*Political forums on dialogue about gender and other markers of oppression would help increase awareness and subsequent enthusiasm to mobilize change.</p>
<p>10.* Participants agreed that a biologically determined gender conceptualization made it difficult to associate gender with power agendas.</p>	<p>*Feminist post-structural theories were relevant to understanding our lived experience.</p> <p>*Feminist post-structural insights offered new ways to conceptualize and eventually resist unnecessarily restrictive identity roles.</p>

DISCUSSION

Questioning gendered identity

I began my project looking for ways to speak about the effects of gendered identity that did not focus on gender differences. Focusing on participants' experiences in which their gender became explicit allowed me to empirically explore the relevance of feminist post-structural theories about the current oppression of the patriarchal gendered system. Oppressive aspects of the cultural system were of particular interest since they have been overlooked in empirical research.

Traditionally, psychological research has expounded upon the differences between men and women and claimed a neutral stance with regard to the meanings of these differences (Buss & Craik, 1984, Bem, 1974, Caspi & Bem, 1990). This is not to say researchers have dismissed the meanings of gender distinctions. Instead, researchers had a difficult, if not impossible, time getting to the meaning of gender distinction because of the need to simplify relational contexts in such a way that they become objectified and measurable (Lippa and Hershberger, 1991). Researchers have assumed that cultural context neutrally discloses phenomena, and thus requires an equally neutral or objective investigative methodology.

In opposition to this neutrality, feminist post-structuralists focused on oppressive consequences that emanate from the patriarchal context that prioritizes white, heterosexual, masculine discourse. Distinctions such as those made between genders were addressed as places from which to investigate the agendas or strategies that maintain this oppression and the meanings that result.

Empirically investigating the distinctions drawn between genders (or any other identity marker) is complicated by feminist post-structuralists' premise that all identity distinctions are arbitrary. In other words, using arbitrary markers, like gender, for the purpose of empirical investigation can compromise the claim that current identity markers do not exist outside of our particular patriarchal discourse. However, not looking at the effects of the designations equally reifies the suffering experienced by those who are oppressed by the markers. Thus, although feminist post-structuralists have posed places from which to critique and resist the current patriarchal discourse, the mobilization of these theories for the purpose of resistance has lagged.

hooks (1990), who refuses to capitalize her penname in order to disengage from patriarchal hierarchical demands, critiqued the "master narratives" of academia with the following words;

Post modernist discourses are often exclusionary even as they call attention to, appropriate even, the experience of 'difference' and 'Otherness' to provide oppositional political meaning, legitimacy, and immediacy when they are accused of lacking concrete relevance./.../It is sadly ironic that the contemporary discourse which talks the most about heterogeneity, the decentered subject, declaring breakthroughs that allow recognition of Otherness, still directs its critical voice primarily to a specialized audience that shares a common language rooted in the very master narratives it claims to challenge. If radical postmodernist thinking is to have a transformative impact, then a critical break with the notion of 'authority' as 'mastery over' must not simply be a rhetorical device. It must be reflected in habits of being, including styles of writing as well as chosen subject matter (p. 23-25).

Although hooks talked specifically about academia being enslaved in a master, or "white," narrative, she implicated the hierarchical structure of the academic canon in general. As such, her critique is applicable to any discourse that proclaims to dialogue about "Otherness" but does not prioritize the relevance that the body of thought has on an experiential level for those it addresses. To fail to consider the relevance and accessibility

of a project to its participants is to perpetuate the “master narrative” that prizes the distinct separation between the academic elite and the “common” populace.

hooks’ critique applies to feminist post-structural theorists since few studies have focused on implementing philosophical insights empirically, and even less have paid attention to the mobilization of these insights on a broader scale (Mauthner, & Doucet, 1998, Brown & Giligan, 1998, Miller, 1998). Furthermore, philosophical insights are rarely written in a language accessible to research participants, making direct assessment difficult.

Places from which to question gender: empirically investigating feminist post-structural insights

Although feminist post-structural insights were not situated in lived experience, I took hooks’ advice and mobilized theoretical insights that were valuable to participants I believed were oppressed by virtue of their gendered identity. I selected participants on the basis of marginalization to disrupt this position. Accordingly, I included them in the analysis phase and included myself as a participant to disrupt typical research protocols. Using their oppressed identity as a selection criterion was a step towards helping them become less oppressed as evidenced by their reports of empowerment.

Including participants in the analysis phase and using their dialogue to determine the course of the interviews helped me avoid what Brown and Gilligan (1992) called “corroborating silence prescribed for females” (p. 10). Their desire to disrupt the objective stance prescribed to researchers to empower the young participants stood out as a particularly political and empowering part of their methodology.

Since I wanted to enact a similar stance, I engaged participants in an open-ended dialogue and shared my interpretations with them. This allowed participants to speak about intersections between race, sexual identification, among other identity markers that I had not anticipated. Explicating power dynamics between participants and I helped us to confront these differences explicitly and explore ways to understand each other's perspectives and privileges.

Working with older participants allowed me to engage in a dialogue less constricted by age than the research of Brown and Gilligan (1992). Working with adults eased the dialogue because we faced fewer power dynamics such as those between adults and children. Participants grappled with theory that would have been too abstract to address with children. This exposure helped them to develop insights about gendered differences that existed among cultures, families, and history. With this maturity, came the possibility that participants could disseminate new insights to other adults, making the political implications more thematic.

Participants' experiences with gender-focused courses eased our dialogue because we shared similar experiences with academic discourse. Both participants were master's-level social workers who worked as clinicians in a similar way to this researcher. Our similarities in academic background facilitated both theoretical and personal dialogue since participants seemed unaffected by my status as a doctoral candidate. This was an important consideration, since the rigor of my analysis rested on participants' willingness to engage in a dialogue involving some confrontation.

Although participants' willingness to assert themselves was not necessarily due to their education, their experiences with identity conceptualization and dialoguing with

theory was evident. The gender-focused course participation criterion was also significant because participants' narratives shed light on some implications for the curriculum of these courses.

Both participants responded to my disclosure of a feminist agenda with stories of discrimination. Their stories showed they were aware of gender-based discrimination and identified feminist agendas consonantly. Though participants' disclosures about discrimination and negative consequences were not surprising, given that I asked them to speak about times when gender was an issue, the idea that they might not have disclosed these stories otherwise was unexpected. In other words, requesting stories about gender might not have been enough to elicit disclosures of oppressive consequences.

Reflecting on our gendered position was important because we caught sight of the ways in which gender impacted our lives that was not explicit. For example, one participant realized that she often devalued her abilities in comparison to male counterparts. This devaluation was so implicit that she did not recognize the impact this had on her self-esteem. Our dialogues supported feminist post-structural theories that pose silence as a crucial and dangerous strategy of a patriarchal discourse. By disrupting the silence, we gained the ability to distance ourselves from unnecessary limitations.

For example, as 'Samantha's' experience of her gender designation shifted from an implicit to an explicit understanding, she was able to consider ways to make changes in her life. 'Samantha' confronted her boyfriend about their differences in gender ideology and this helped them to establish more acceptable expectations of each other.

'Participants' active roles in the research project were possible because they shared, critiqued, and discussed gendered experience. The increased roles they played also

provided me with the opportunity to depict their experiences more accurately, and thus gain a better understanding of the ways gendered identity impacted them. For example, ‘Samantha’s’ narrative would have been characterized by passivity if she had not been willing to confront my interpretation. The second meeting provided me with an opportunity to expose ‘Samantha’ to this interpretation. She clarified she was not ambivalent about issues of discrimination but appeared this way because she tended to minimize her own insight.

Participants’ ambivalence to identify gender with oppression signified that gendered prescriptions were often implicit, which made oppressive aspects less focal and less easy to articulate. For example, ‘Samantha’ only drew connections between gender and discrimination when encouraged to do so by this researcher. She did feel racial identification was oppressive and listed several ways that it was more prominent. Her views shifted when she was exposed to feminist post-structural theory, and recalled instances where her gender was the basis of discrimination. She acknowledged limitations dictated by her gender designation, particularly her identification with prescribed limits.

This finding fits with hooks’ (1984) summation. In her words,

Under capitalism, patriarchy is structured so that sexism restricts women’s behavior in some realms even as freedom from limitations is allowed in other spheres. The absence of extreme restrictions leads many women to ignore the areas in which they are exploited/./it may even lead them to imagine that no women are oppressed (p. 5).

In other words, restrictions and limitations based on gender fade into the background and become acceptable in the absence of extreme restriction. In other words, restrictions go undetected. Even more dangerous, according to hooks, is that this acceptance leads us to become complacent about oppression. From the position of complacency, we

generalize from our unconscious acceptance of limited oppression and minimize the experiences of others. We protect ourselves from being conscious of our own vulnerability and our unnecessarily constricted position by denying that it exists.

The maintenance of oppression through denial signifies the need to validate participants' experiences of oppression by encouraging them to recognize and report it. If gendered identity is largely unconscious, researchers need to work to make these issues explicit. I was able to highlight participants' oppressive experiences by contextualizing their experiences as oppressed from the outset, and then encouraging them to focus on times when their gender was an issue. With the support of feminist post-structural theory, participants and I recognized limits imposed by the patriarchal prescriptions of gender and became less apathetic about gender issues.

In addition to merely applying feminist post-structural constructs to participants' dialogue, I enacted a feminist post-structural stance by making our relational dynamics part of our dialogue. Disclosing my feminist post-structural agenda during the first interview did more than encourage participants to talk about negative experiences of gender. It was an initial step toward disrupting dynamics typically prescribed for researchers and participants. Another disruption occurred when I made the relational dynamics explicit instead of reifying the context from which the dialogue emerged. This was the most useful part of the analysis because this allowed us to confront our differences in privilege.

Both participants confronted this researcher about differences in privilege and roles within the research project after they were exposed to interpretations that made to these

differences explicit. Participants' confrontations clarified the different kinds of impacts they faced as a result of their identifications.

For example, although the participant who identified as a lesbian was initially dismissive of the risk of identifying her sexual preference, she later admitted that she felt vulnerable in her role of participant. Framing this disclosure as "coming out" implied that 'Ann' felt some reservation about revealing her sexual preference, while it also showed that she felt this risk was necessary to give a full description of her experience as a woman. Making this risk explicit within our dialogue helped us to enter into a dialogue about the implicit ways that she felt threatened and ignored within the larger cultural discourse. This intervention helped 'Ann' to feel validated for the reality of the oppression she suffered.

Despite confrontations with each participant, my differences in privilege still weighed heavily on our dialogues. Rather than exploring how these differences changed the shape of the discourse between us, we focused on the differences in privilege in a more general way. Our decision to shift from personal dynamics to the cultural context stemmed from the discomfort we felt as we moved away from prescribed rules of conduct that deemed differences in privilege unspeakable.

For example, I was caught up in my privilege as a white woman by prioritizing gender over other oppressive identity markers. It took confrontation by a black identified participant to help me recognize that I was promoting what hooks (1984) called the "myth of common oppression" by privileging gender (p. 44). I initially conceived 'Samantha's' hesitation to link gender with oppression as a sign that she was not as aware of oppressive experiences as I was. To see 'Samantha's' hesitation as a sign of her

desire to differentiate her experiences from mine makes more sense than my arrogant interpretation that I, as a white woman, knew more about oppression than she, as a black woman. hooks (1984) denounced feminists who sought to equalize experiences of oppression because this minimized the very real differences in privilege that exists between women. I hope my reinterpretation of ‘Samantha’s’ dialogue is a more accurate representation of her viewpoint, and showed that equalizing or ranking oppression obfuscates lived experience in the service of those with more privileges.

My attempts to categorize and subsequently rank oppression also showed I was not able to leave hierarchical discourse behind. Instead of engaging in this contest of equalizing and prioritizing, I should have caught sight of the times when the patriarchal discourse made it difficult to move away from hierarchical constructions. I was diverted by the patriarchal order, or what Irigaray (1985) termed “a project of diversion, deflection, and reduction of the other in the Same” (p. 74). Instead of interpreting this failure as a sign that researchers with privilege should avoid differentially oppressed groups, or that feminist post-structural principles cannot be put into practice, it signified the need to refine ways to spot difficulties escaping the current discourse.

Valorizing participants’ feedback and focusing on gendered narratives during multiple interviews, encouraged participants and I, to engage in reflection beyond the interviews. It is my contention that this response showed we were able to recognize ways we were impacted by gendered designation, which facilitated empowerment.

The positive change reflected in our increased awareness was not surprising, given that most psychological or therapeutic approaches value insight in some form. Analytic approaches, in particular, begin with the assumption that people are not fully aware of the

meanings they give to a particular issue which impedes growth (See Boss, 1963, Fink's description of Lacan, 1997, Freud, 1938). Most analytic work tends to help clients become more reflective about meanings that unnecessarily constrict the ways in which they relate to others, the world, and themselves. Clinical work becomes therapeutic when clients become more aware of the issues they face and are able to make changes accordingly.

In keeping with hooks (1990, 1984), I believe researchers should also prioritize the needs of their participants, particularly when they are selected on the basis of oppression. Although participants showed that my pedagogical interventions were not enough to eradicate unequal power dynamics between us, they did have an opportunity to confront my ignorance about the ways their experiences differed from my own. I drew from my experience as a therapist, and used interpretation and process comments to encourage participants to reflect and gain insight. By discussing our differences in privilege, we gained a clearer understanding of ourselves, as well as each other. Since this training was useful during this study, it follows that therapeutic literature and experience could be used more often to help researchers discover ways to intervene during data collection, particularly when political and ethical changes are advocated by them.

For example, analytic approaches to therapy prioritize dynamics between analysts and patients. Because analysts believe interpersonal issues that arise outside of the context of the session will emerge in the session as well, they use these in-session dynamics to address issues the client is experiencing in other arenas (Casement, 1991 Malan, 1998, Fink, 1997). Analysts' interventions are then used to help the client become more aware of the ways they are constricting or imposing something onto the therapeutic dialogue

that can be changed by virtue of this awareness and processing the meanings that emerge within the dynamic.

Adapting this approach to the context of research makes sense given some of the similarities between analyst's and researcher's roles. For example, because I wanted to help participants become more aware of their oppression, I posed their experiences as such when I interpreted our dialogue. Exposing them to these interpretations helped us to talk about the ways they were oppressed within our relationship and within the patriarchal discourse. As a result of this intervention, participants became more aware of the ways they were constricted by gender-based prescriptions, as well as ways to conceptualize their roles differently.

Meeting with each participant three times instead of once provided us with the opportunity to establish what therapists call a "working or therapeutic alliance" (Mitchell & Black, 1995). The increased comfort enabled participants and I to confront differences in racial and sexual privileges that may have felt too intrusive otherwise.

An advantage of a relationally focused methodology, as evident in this project, is that I was able to engage with participants in a way that was therapeutic instead of objective. As a result, participants' oppressed position was disrupted, if only temporarily. Participants did more than supply data since they were also able to change the course of the project by sharing their experiences.

This approach, however, did not provide an unfettered method or final answer about the meaning of gendered identity. Instead, it showed the parallel process between the phenomenon of gendered identities as disclosed within an unnecessarily restrictive discourse and the need to adopt approaches that are similarly entangled. Feminist post-

structural researchers endorse the unfinished nature of reflexive and relational work because they believe these findings are more reflective of the phenomenon in question than accounts that artificially separate issues (Lather, 1991, Butler, 1990, hooks, 1990, Mauthner & Doucet, 1998).

This means that claims of truth cannot be made in feminist post-structural accounts because any claim of truth is antithetical to the notion that no experience exists outside of the context from which it arises. The implications for this project are that participants' accounts are more reflective of this researcher's perceptions than those of the participants. Findings of this study are perspectival, meaning they are reflections of the relationship that I saw between participants' experiences and feminist post-structural theory, and not meant to serve as any kind of final truth about gendered experiences.

Participants' accounts are meant to signify a valorization of women's stories in order to disrupt the silence prescribed to this type of discourse. This project showed that feminist post-structural strategies of resistance were viable when used in the service of developing ways to interact with participants. Accordingly, participants offered insights into the impacts of gendered identity and, as a result, clarified places from which strategies of resistance could be implemented.

Places from which the oppression of gendered identity can be resisted

Discussing gendered identity felt empowering to participants and I because we became more aware of the ways we were impacted by this and other markers that designate marginalized identities. Pedagogical approaches to research emerged as relevant resistance strategies because participants were more willing to expose experiences of marginalization and were more likely to endorse affirmative changes

when issues of oppression were made explicit by feminist post-structural theory. This increase in awareness among the three of us suggested the oppressive aspects of gendered identity were often implicit, and as a result were minimized by ourselves as well as the larger culture.

This finding suggests that at least some of the participants' (including this researcher) contradictory reports about awareness of gender-based discrimination and a lack of resolve to make changes in this condition were due to the implicit ways in which this and other identity markers conferred marginalization. For example, neither participant chose to take part in this project on the basis of recognition that gender was marked by discrimination. One participant did not attribute discriminatory aspects to gender, and the other no longer felt hope for change, though she had been involved in resistance movements for 20 years. Despite the differences in perspectives, both agreed by the project's end that gender was an oppressive identity marker. Emphasizing oppressive effects helped us become more aware of our own perpetuation of gender-based ideals, which enabled us to make decisions to change this.

The apathetic response to gendered oppression can be expanded to include contradictory experiences found in other research. Williams and Wittig (1997) issued a survey and found that few women endorsed affirmative changes in the realm of gender issues even though they readily identified that gender was used as a basis for discrimination. This apathetic stance towards gender issues only makes sense if the suffering that accompanies the issue is minimized. Minimizing issues faced by women is dangerous because, as hooks' argued (1984), "The absence of extreme restrictions leads

many women to ignore the areas in which they are exploited/..../It may even lead them to imagine that no women are oppressed (p.5).”

hooks’ (1984) argument is applicable to any marginalized identity marked as such within a patriarchal discourse, since much of the oppressive aspects are covered over and denied. Larger cultural dynamics are rarely implicated in discourse about oppression. Instead, research tends to focus on the issues as if they emerged from out of nowhere. Levi-Strauss’s (1969) explanation of gender differences is just one example that serves to make sense of the dynamics between men and women without attending to the oppressive effects of this identity and the subsequent need to change it. I would argue that the objective role, adopted by most researchers, supports the maintenance of oppressive identities because it poses the issues faced by oppressed groups as natural and thus necessary.

Minimization of suffering leads to complacency, which allows us to simply ignore issues faced by others and exist as if we live in a solipsistic environment. We are lured into thinking our environment does not affect us, which allows us to perceive others’ suffering as the result of individual flaws. For example, ‘Samantha,’ who was very conscious of the subjugation of blacks, tended not to condemn larger cultural outlets such as the media for the continuation of oppression. Instead, she wondered aloud why blacks adopted marginalizing roles, and as a result, abused each other.

The lack of attention to patriarchal agendas within discourse with participants permeated our beliefs about ourselves, and those we held toward others. We made sense of our environment in a self-blaming way that did not lend itself to critique larger cultural systems. Oppressive dynamics were only detected when participants were affected in a

particularly explicit way. For example, ‘Ann’ was not able to participate in church activities because of her gender. Waiting for oppression to become more explicit, seems a dangerous alternative to becoming more aware of our positions within society at the present time.

Reflection on and exposure to alternative points of view about gender disrupted participants’ (including this researcher) apathy since we changed the ways we spoke about gender. For example, ‘Samantha’ was able to recognize implicit ways she was oppressed on the basis of gender and race by reflecting on her experiences. In spite of this endorsement of change, however, ‘Samantha’ maintained she was not optimistic that this would occur since, in her words, “it would be too much for people to consider.”

In light of participants’ disclosures, it seems likely that the hesitance of the survey respondents in Williams and Wittig’s (1997) research was as much linked to a sense of hopelessness that change would occur as it was to the lack of recognition of these issues. Resistance movements concerned with gendered discrimination, as well as other forms of discrimination, are less vocal than they were in the 1960s and 70s, and people’s desire to get involved in changing this atmosphere is lacking. Participants in the current project, for example, (including the participant who was very active in resistance movements over the past 20 years) only participated because they felt sympathy for researchers, and not because they wanted to engage in a political act.

The lack of hope expressed by participants in this study and by those who participated in Williams and Wittig’s (1997) survey suggests changes in gendered identity have been as slow and implicit as the oppressive aspects of experience. This suggests that political forums need to validate positive changes in gendered identity to remind us that progress

has been made even if we still need to do more to disrupt the current system. For example, it is not a coincidence that ‘Ann’ was more hopeful, and consequently more active in political movements during the 1960s and 70s. She witnessed changes in women’s rights as they occurred, and valued the support she felt from fellow activists.

What was missing at the time of this study was ‘Ann’s’ belief in positive changes. This lack of hope corresponded with her declining participation in resistance movements. This was significant because political awareness was not sufficient for ‘Ann’ to feel motivated to participate in resistance groups. Therefore, a correlation can be made between hope, support, action, and results.

hooks (1984) attributed the decline in feminist progress to the lack of solidarity among women’s groups. She attributed the lack of what she termed “sisterhood,” to women “bonding on the terms set by the dominant ideology of our Western culture” (p. 47). According to hooks, white, straight, middle class women set an agenda that did not meet the needs of those most sorely oppressed and only addressed issues salient to the most privileged of the group. This hierarchical approach prohibited the establishment of the intimacy needed to understand and disrupt the hierarchical structures that created the oppression in the first place.

Both participants’ stories supported hooks (1984) claims. For example, ‘Ann’ felt comfortably a part of the women’s movement until sexual orientation was singled out as a difference in agenda. As the split between feminist agendas and LGBT movement became more prominent, ‘Ann’s’ priorities shifted from women’s issues to LGBT issues which was reflected in her activities.

Similarly, ‘Samantha’s’ lack of awareness about feminist agendas was striking given her passion for pursuing education about racial and religious issues. She did not have a clear definition of feminism, or political action, aside from an image of women burning their bras. ‘Samantha’s’ strong identification with racial discrimination in the absence of gender issues suggested she could not identify with both issues despite the fact that she was marked with both identities. ‘Samantha’s’ perception of the women’s movement was that identification with feminism would somehow negate or minimize her role in the fight against racially-based oppression.

The patriarchal discourse created a false split that reified identities of oppression with arbitrary markers. If this split is accepted, there is no room to question the relationship between identity markers. The divisions among identities actually served to divide, rather than unify, groups in an arbitrary manner in the same way the markers are designated. For example, each participant prioritized one identity marker over another to emphasize the marker that carried the most oppressive consequences. As a result, particular parts of their identities were minimized, as were the effects that accompanied these additional markers.

This finding implied that the discourse on marginalization needed to be holistic. In other words, resistance movements would need to include all identifying markers disclosed by the patriarchal discourse to dismantle hierarchical constructions. Solidifying political agendas by creating a sisterhood among political factions would be more reflective of the lived experience and be a more efficient way to enact resistance. Since feminist post-structuralists like Irigaray and Butler pose all markers as arbitrary, this same discourse could be used against the marking system for the sake of resistance.

Lacan (1957/1977) offered a way out of the current system because he conceptualized any and all Symbolic discourses (or culturally recognized discourse) as arbitrary.

Although this characterized Symbolic discourse as mutable, Lacan (1957/1977) was careful to point out there was no separation between lived experience and the 'Real.' In other words, no experience exists outside of the shared cultural discourse, which makes it difficult if not impossible to escape. That which is not symbolized does not exist.

Lacan did not emphasize the ways in which these systems should change, nor did he work to ease the limits placed on those marked female, with skin darker than white, with sexual identities different from heterosexual, and those living by less than middle class standards.

Pointing to the contradiction between our assumption that differences are distinct and necessary and the ambiguous boundaries that we draw in lived experience seems a significant place from which feminist post-structural theorists could clarify and establish a tangible link that could result in significant changes. Concrete places from which resistance and subsequent change could emerge are needed as opposed to relegating these possibilities to abstractions and theoretical discourse.

Irigaray (1985) established this connection when she valorized women's identity as a place from which to escape the restrictions of the currently patriarchal discourse. In other words, she designated women's identity as the place to enact resistance because it was largely dismissed and ignored within patriarchal discourse. As a result, women's subjectivity was less constricted because the female identity was characterized by lack. Said another way, women were in a better position to develop a discourse that moved beyond patriarchy because their subjectivity was not symbolized by it. This was

significant because women are asked to relinquish their identities as less than by playing up their lack of patriarchal limits.

‘In Irigaray’s (1985) terms, ‘Ann’s’ identity provided more possibilities for resistance precisely because the patriarchal discourse vehemently subverted her identity as a darker skinned, lesbian, woman to one of deficiency. ‘Ann’s’ dialogue worked against the linearity of the patriarchal discourse because her refusal to identify with the silence prescribed to her gendered designation allowed her to use this identity as the place to become an activist. This was a precise enactment of turning the patriarchal discourse against itself as advocated by Irigaray.

Acknowledging the fluidity of gendered/marginalized experience was difficult for participants and I, despite our agreement that biological conceptualizations of gender were unnecessarily restrictive. Our stories were filled with instances in which the circumstances of our lived experiences took precedence over any limits prescribed to gender, race, or sexual identifications. However, this fluidity went unnoticed. It remained difficult to imagine relinquishing the seemingly determined or natural quality of these identity markers and to imagine others doing the same.

Butler (1997) suggested that this fear of letting go of the known (gendered identity) was prescribed by the patriarchal context. According to Butler (1997), the patriarchal preoccupation with heterosexuality represses all other types of attachments. We accept this loss to avoid the loss of certainty provided by the current discourse. In effect, losing patriarchy would mean the loss of all identity markers (race, class, sexual identities, , and so forth) and the consequences that emanate from them.

As Butler (1997) reminded us, the fear of the unknown is more profound and powerful than the desire to heal. According to Žižek (1994) most people are “terrified when they encounter freedom” because the moment when “the principle of sufficient reason is suspended, is the moment when the symbolic chain of being in the symbolic reality is broken” (p. 27). In other words, freedom is the moment we are not bound by limits. Thus, in the absence of a separation that distinguishes us from one another, we no longer have a discourse. Instead, we are left outside, adrift from all that we know. Reconsidering these identities would lead to a conceptual crisis because we would no longer be able to hold onto anything familiar.

Clinical practitioners address this anxiety within therapeutic contexts, and their insights could be successfully employed within the context of revolution as well. For example, a core element a therapist contends with is how to disrupt the certainty the client brings to the therapeutic context in an effort. This disruption is necessary to begin to help the client think about the situation(s) in a way that allows for changes. As such, insight about the problem is often a first step toward making changes in the clinical realm, just as it is for marginalized groups who are not wholly aware of the ways they have limited themselves and have been constricted by others.

In the course of this journey towards self-awareness, the insight/depth oriented therapist draws out the “full range of the client’s feelings” to see what kinds of issues surround the problem (Teyber, 1997, p. 140). The client’s willingness to explore the anxiety that is evoked as a result of uncovering repressed issues lies in the therapist’s ability to “contain” the client’s anxiety and assure him/her that s/he can endure the pain of exploration (p. 140). The therapist’s ability to contain the client’s anxiety is dependent

on his/her ability to “maintain a steady presence in the face of the client’s pain and distress” (p. 140). The therapist must show the client through “presence and emotional availability” that s/he would not be overwhelmed by the client’s feelings, just as the client would be able to endure the pain that accompanies the emotions (p. 140).

According to Teyber, this containment is necessary for the therapist to eventually be able to “empower [clients] to begin acting in new and more adaptive ways” (p. 140).

Similarly, revolutionaries must attend to the anxiety provoked by reconceptualizing the current discourse to help all of us begin to adopt more adaptive approaches to our experience/identity. We need to find some way to create safe places that would encourage this exploration. Just as we need therapists in the clinical setting, we need the steady presence of guides that could do the same. Participant ‘Ann’s’ experiences in the 1970s offered one such example.

‘Ann’ explored her sexual identity during a time she felt nurtured by women who acknowledged the oppressive prescriptions ascribed to gender designations and the accompanying restrictions placed on sexual identification. Although ‘Ann’s’ identification as a lesbian provided her with a means to get her emotional, sexual, and relational needs met, it also validated her deviation from heterosexual prescriptions for desire. As a result of this deviation, her new identification changed how she related to others and herself in ways that could not be anticipated.

The politically charged, emotionally intimate group of people who validated difference seemed to help ‘Ann’ through this process. ‘She took the risk at a particular time when her anxiety about changing her identity was contained by others who were present to her pain and anxiety and expressed their acceptance and hope for affirmative

changes. As a result of this support and guidance, ‘Ann’s’ fear was not greater than her desire to heal.

Small, intimate places of sanctuary (where those who feel distanced from the current patriarchal or masculinized-heterosexualized-racialized-classified culture gather) may be the very same places from which a different kind of discourse can emerge. Organized political forums, in conjunction with clinical therapeutic guidance, can be used as models for the creation of safe havens where we can gain the support needed to contend with our own uncertainty. We must not buy into the assumption that hopelessness exists outside of the current categories. Similarly, we must heed Butler’s (1990) warning that the enemy exists within us and, as such, we must contend with our own ability to reinstate hierarchical constructions. We must learn to contain our own and others’ ambiguities and find ways to instate the beginnings of a new discourse that is not oppressive.

Implementing resistance through coursework: developing politically relevant curriculums

One way to begin a large-scale initiative against the implicit and explicit means of oppression and subsequent resistance movements is to look for forums that already explore marginalized identities. One forum I focused on was gender-focused coursework. Despite participants’ clarification that gender cannot be separated from other identities, I believe the insights they provided about their experiences in gender-focused courses could easily be applied to courses that address other identities as well.

The most useful aspects of the gender-focused courses seemed to be the opportunity to focus on, and discuss, issues women face. As was discussed, much of the oppression faced by women and other marginalized identities has been covered over, which suggests that insight is a first step towards resistance of oppression. Both participants experienced

their gender-focused courses as liberating, because they received validation for their insights about gender and enjoyed discussing their experiences as women.

Both participants used the word “empowering” to describe their experiences in their gender-focused courses. ‘Ann’ talked of feeling like part of a group for the first time, both in the class and particularly in the campus women’s center. She was relieved to be surrounded by people who shared her views and validated her oppressed experiences. This course empowered ‘Ann’ politically and personally, as she learned the extensive history of feminist contributions that changed the cultural climate.

Although ‘Ann’ felt empowered by her exposure to feminist theory and history in the course, this experience was secondary to her participation in a college women’s center. The opportunities to participate in a woman- focused campus center, and women’s political movement in the late 1970s broadened her perspective in a way that the women’s course alone could not. In light of this connection, ‘Ann’ told stories of oppression with ease and readily attributed gendered oppression to a patriarchal cultural context in which women, particularly lesbian women who did not conform to expectations, were rejected.

Gender and other issues of marginalization have become less focal in our current cultural climate. For example, ‘Samantha’ only took the course out of curiosity and a desire to participate in a small class, and not because she identified gender as a political issue. In the absence of widespread recognition of issues of marginalization, gender-focused coursework takes on more importance as a forum to address the oppression not otherwise spoken. Instructors have the burden of establishing a curriculum relevant to the needs of those addressed. Establishing connections to political movements also seems

important because these groups have shown they have the ability to mobilize resistance on a large scale when they have the resources, and advocates, to do so.

The prominent issue of ‘Samantha’s’ reports about her gender-focused course was that political oppression and power dynamics remained implicit. Although ‘Samantha’ attributed her interest in women’s unique experiences to her course, she did not gain a clear sense of larger cultural implications, nor did she have an informed definition of feminism. The lack of connection to power dynamics and feminist literature is notable because this may have been ‘Samantha’s,’ and a lot of other women’s sole opportunity to engage in a dialogue about oppressive identity markers and the strategies to change them.

In the absence of discussion of power dynamics, Samantha’ was not aware of the intrinsic connection between this marker and oppression and as a result, she was not particularly motivated to advocate for change. Samantha’s’ willingness to engage in a more resistance-oriented dialogue during our interviews, showed that her initial hesitance to endorse feminist agendas was not a reflection of disagreement, but rather a reflection of the lack of relevant issues addressed in her gender-focused course.

Feminism should be addressed in gender-focused courses. In the absence of any discussion, ‘Samantha’ was left with an image of feminists as “bra burners” with no explanation of what this image symbolized. In the absence of explanation, ‘Samantha’ adopted the denigrated view of feminists that could easily have been easily mitigated in her gender-focused course.

Another curriculum-based critique is the absence of male roles when discussing gender. Both participants reported that only a few men participated in their gender-focused courses, and the role of men within the gender system was not addressed.

Focusing on women's, and not men's oppression within the current system, as in the case of this project, may contribute to a misunderstanding that men do not have a place within resistance movements. As a result, men seem not to identify with gender issues. For example male respondents in Williams and Wittig (1997) survey were less likely to endorse women's issues and acknowledge oppression. I would add that the term "gender" implies both women and men, and as such, both groups have a place within this dialogue.

Men's absence from the revolution is dangerous because the fight against oppression is compromised unnecessarily. Feminist post-structuralists are particularly attuned to the restrictions placed on all identities conferred within a patriarchal discourse, which means that men's identities will need to be displaced just as those of women's. Though men stand to lose privilege, they also stand to gain possibilities available to more fluid conceptualizations of identity.

If gender-focused courses included men explicitly, it would help them become aware of the roles they could play in the fight against oppression. The overall lack of endorsement by both women and men for the disruption of gendered identity was partially clarified by both 'Ann' and 'Samantha,' who noted that the stigma attached to identifying with gender issues kept women and men from taking gender issues and gender-focused courses seriously. This stigma could be disrupted if gender-focused courses, research projects, and political forums distributed information about the effects of gendered designation.

Since feminists and other political groups rarely receive widespread attention, politically-focused projects and courses bear the weight of disseminating this viewpoint.

If gender-focused courses, research projects, and literature do not take up feminist viewpoints and at least address oppression peripherally, feminism as a movement is left open to misrepresentation by popular culture. As was addressed by this study, the current political climate is patriarchal, and, as such, has a vested interest in overlooking feminist agendas. The burden of disrupting this power structure falls to those who identify oppression as a phenomenon that can and should be disrupted.

Challenges of the current project and implications for future work

Although the present study shed light on the complexity of gendered experience as disclosed by feminist post-structuralists, several issues with the method impeded my ability to valorize participants' narratives and be aware of the ways I was hierarchical in my approach. In addition, the method was laborious and, at times, repetitive, which might discourage future application.

Although I attempted to disrupt conventional power dynamics between participants and researchers, there were still many times I did not catch sight of my reiteration of hierarchical dynamics. It was particularly difficult to notice this while interacting with participants. For example, I tended to minimize the differences in privilege between the participants and myself by prioritizing gendered oppression over other issues they faced as women with racial and sexual identification markers, among others. I minimized the despair expressed by 'Ann' in the service of showcasing my agenda of showing affirmative changes available through insight. I also tended to minimize disagreement between participants and myself when this served my opinions, such as when I silenced 'Samantha's' feelings about her relationship with her boyfriend.

Perspectivity could have been better served in the present study if more than one researcher was present during interviews. An additional perspective could have helped me to spot hierarchical responses as they occurred during the interviews, while also providing another perspective to enrich the interpretations made about the participants' accounts. This would have provided more complexity and valorized the importance of non-linear approaches to knowledge by showcasing more than one perspective.

Working towards perspectivity within research methodology ultimately changes the meanings that emerge from research. Pedagogical approaches to research free the researcher to make an impact on those s/he is studying in the absence of fear of muddying objectivity. Research takes on the important role of social change and should be valued as a means to mediate the phenomenon in question, changing the understanding of researchers and readers in a formative way.

Perspectival research applications help participant, researcher, and the audience alike gain insight into the ways the researcher's perspective shaped the results of an empirical study. What is lost in the way of definitive claims is gained in terms of a representation of the context from which the participants' disclosures emerged. As a result, participants' views are less pathologized because their dialogues are not posed as if they existed outside of mediation by the researcher.

Although there is no way to completely eradicate power differences between researchers and their participants, more could have been done in this project to disrupt the vulnerability that plagues participants' roles. One such alternative would be to have one, or multiple other researchers interview each other for the purpose of clarifying their perspectives. This clarity would provide the reader with more insight into the way

researchers' agendas influenced participants' disclosures. In addition, these same researcher reflections could be offered to participants to help them understand where the researcher is coming from and anticipate how this might influence the ways their disclosures would be interpreted. More than just providing participants with additional information, this step might increase the researcher's ability to empathize with participants and anticipate ways to facilitate a less anxiety producing dialogue.

The fact that I shared my feminist agenda with participants might not have been enough to help them understand the ways their disclosures would be interpreted. Participants would have been better served by a clear and concise explanation of my particular feminist agenda before even entering into the interviews. This issue was particularly relevant, given that one participant could not even define feminism.

If I had it to do over again, I would have explained the following ideas. First, I believe women are oppressed, and I believe this oppression emanates from a hierarchical system that designates gender/race/sexual identification, , and so forth, in such a way that these markers are always posed in opposition to each other. I also believe marginalized identities are deemed as such by mediations of power dynamics that determine privileges. In addition, I believe that post-structural insights provide unique places from which to question gender, and subsequent intersections of other markers of marginalization, because these theorists break away from essential (or biological) categories. In doing so, these they break away from the current discourse that does not allow for change.

In response to the lack of clarity I provided about my particular agenda, it is likely that participants reacted defensively to protect their vulnerability from someone whom they perceived to have more power. Participants' endorsement of feminist post-structural

theories might have been an instance in which they were less willing to dispute ideas or confront me because they were less knowledgeable and had less education about these issues than myself. In addition to clarifying my agenda, I could have left my initial questions more ambiguous and allowed participants to disclose their beliefs with less pressure to conform to my preferences.

Several institutional limitations compromised participants' ability to move into a more empowered role. The first notable factor was that I reserved the right as the researcher to make decisions about the presentation of the study. Although I could not have eradicated this position, short of putting the interpretive and theoretical work onto the participants, this issue needs to be noted to remind others that participants in no way retained as much power as I did. This limitation is as related to methodological issues particular to this project as it is to institutional restrictions.

Since the project was developed to satisfy educational requirements, I needed to comply with requests made by a dissertation review committee. Although I agreed with the committee's suggestions to reformulate the Results section and therefore move the participants' accounts to the Appendix, in the service of theoretical clarity, I regret not doing enough to valorize participants' stories. Gearing my study more towards the preservation of personal testimonials, at the expense of theoretical elaboration, would have been a better way to disengage from hierarchical constructions of knowledge. Although this might have met with more resistance from the dissertation review committee, it would have been more politically relevant because the text would not have been as bogged down in elitist discourse.

Another institutional restriction is that access to this dissertation is severely limited by the academic nature of the work. Despite my attempts to address hooks' (1984) criticisms of discourse that do not impact the oppressed, I was unable to write this manuscript in a way that would be likely to clarify issues to those with less access to education. As it stands, the current work only really addressed three people and, because I had no plan to follow up on participants' long-term changes, I will not know if their empowered feelings were fleeting or if the insights gained as a result of this study led to more substantial impacts. As a result, the scope of political activism is severely limited and not likely to have any impact on those who suffer the most under patriarchal discourse.

My ability to cast feminist post-structural theories in a light that showed they were relevant and appealing to people outside of academia was similarly limited. This goal would have been better served if I worked with participants who were not accustomed to theory and self-reflection. I am not sure what would have happened if participants could not reflect on their personal experiences or were not accustomed to reading theory. It is likely less educated participants would not have endorsed my agenda in the same way as did the current participants, who both achieved master's- level degrees and professional status.

Exploration of oppressed identities should be expanded by working with women and men from all kinds of environments. Working with less educated women would certainly have been a more appropriate way to assess the relevance of feminist post-structuralist theories for those who were severely oppressed. Pedagogically speaking, this

exploration would have been more relevant because the needs of the most severely oppressed would be addressed and could be mediated by virtue of this intervention.

Men's experiences also need to be explored empirically if we are to gain a more accurate understanding of their positions within patriarchal discourse. A pedagogical approach would be extremely relevant when working with men, not because they are severely oppressed, but because they need help to recognize their role within the current gender system. Instead of blaming men or ignoring their roles within gendered discourse, as was done by this study, differences in privilege and meaning across intersecting identities of race and class could shed light on the multiple meanings of men's identities. In addition to insight, men should be encouraged to include themselves within resistance movements to pool our resources against a discourse that unnecessarily constricts all our identities.

Another issue that will likely hinder the replication of the current project was the laborious methodology that yielded many details not incorporated into the final results. Although some of the details of the five reading analysis yielded elucidating insights, many of the issues that emerged were repetitive and could have been found with fewer readings. For example, the process reading attended to implicit dynamics between participants and myself. This reading helped me to evaluate my interventions to determine if they were hierarchical or helpful. This made the fifth reading, which specified this as a goal, repetitive. Similarly, while the second reading helped me attend to issues of self-reflection, it could have been collapsed into the process reading as well. With this kind of synthesis, the study would have been more streamlined.

One of the most difficult aspects of this study was the need to assemble some kind of order in which to address the issues. Although some of the reasons for this difficulty emanated from the fluidity of the phenomenon addressed, this issue also suggests that the scope of the study was too large. One way around this would be to select a more specific aspect of gendered or other marginalized identity, such as participants' awareness of oppression. This is not to say gendered identity or any other identity should be depicted in a more linear and/or discrete way, but it highlights the difficulty that hinders explorations not as clearly defined as objective approaches.

Final thoughts

All of the issues addressed point to the importance of giving voice to marginalized identifications on a large scale. Awareness and knowledge are crucial to the politization of oppression. People need encouragement to reflect on their own experiences and uncover ways to disrupt their oppression and that of others. As anticipated by this study, research projects and classrooms are places in which this exploration can begin, but are not enough to promote large-scale changes. We need to find other places from which these ideas can receive more widespread attention, since people who are oppressed do not always have the privilege of participating in academic forums.

The participants' dedication to this project, and subtle attempts to take care of me, such as quickly rescheduling appointments, calling instead of waiting to be called, and making references to the value of the project, helped to make this project feel worthwhile. Perhaps this validation is the most meaningful place from which to encourage future researchers, teachers, and the like to continue to plod along with attempts to disrupt apathy and provoke change. Even if the current study only evoked a fleeting sense of

resistance, the idea that awareness, validation, and change occurred for the three of us felt important.

As a relatively new methodology, feminist post-structural accounts that clearly articulate the perspectival nature of knowledge and in doing so disrupt patriarchal structures, have only begun to help us make sense of the complexity of our lived experience. My hope is that the creation of new, non-hierarchical methods leads to deeper understanding of our lived experience and helps us become less accustomed to, and less comfortable with, the status quo of gender studies. By empowering research participants and prioritizing the betterment of the lives of those we study, I hope that as theoreticians, researchers, and clinicians, we can work towards a less constricted understanding of our gendered selves and in turn make more room for new identities.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Contact and Reflection Logs

Contact and Reflection Log Participant 'Ann'

6/16/03- 10: 46 a.m.- 'Ann' left a message to acknowledge her interest in my project while also adding that she is not sure if she would be considered eligible because she took a gender studies course "so long ago." This participant knew of the study because she read a poster that was hung up at an employee area where she works as a social worker. This poster was placed in this area by an acquaintance of mine who is better acquainted with the surrounding area and agreed to post the flyer at various places such as her university, college hangouts and place of employment.

6/16/03-9:00 p.m.-I left a message for potential participant 'Ann.' I thanked her for calling and encouraged her to call again so we could discuss the study, particularly the implications of participating. I also noted that it did not matter how long ago she participated in the course, only that she had done so, and was over 18 years of age. I left my number and encouraged her to call the next day after 3 p.m. and/or I would try her again as well at a later date.

6/19/03-8:00 a.m.- I received a call from 'Ann' this morning and we were able to set up a meeting for 6/24/03 at 4:30p.m, at her place of work. We will be meeting after she has completed work. I thanked 'Ann' for sticking with this and explained the participation for the study-namely two face to face audio-taped interviews and one follow up phone interview that will not be taped. 'Ann' indicated that this commitment seemed "ok" for now but she also seemed to hesitate in an effort to indicate that there were limits to her willingness to commit her time.

6/24/03-10:50 a.m.- I looked forward to meeting with 'Ann' but was anxious that something may thwart our meeting (since my first scheduled interview with another participant was cancelled four days prior to this one).

6/24/03-4:15 p.m.-Prior to meeting up with 'Ann' I reviewed interview questions and forms. I felt nervous and anxious to begin this phase of my dissertation. Upon review, I came up with the following themes to keep in mind as I interviewed 'Ann':

Goals: Giving voice to women.

Investigating effects of gender courses.

Grounding Post-Structural theories.

Catch sight of apathy, and oppression.

Explore the meanings given to gender.

I also tag an Irigaray, (1985) quote from *This sex which is not one*, Cornell University Press, NY. Expose exploitation common to all women and find struggles appropriate to each woman. p. 166.

Interview takes place from 4:30- 5:45. In a large and quiet conference room that "Ann" had access to because of her status as a professional.

6/24/03-5:45 p.m.-I have just completed my first interview with 'Ann.' Following our interview, 'Ann' expressed feelings of vulnerability about there only being two participants. She then dismissed these concerns saying she is too old. We then proceeded to talk about our work as mental health clinicians as we left the psychiatric unit and proceeded to leave the grounds to go home.

6/24/03-6:30 p.m. -I felt great about the interview, particularly because 'Ann' hit on so many of the issues that I feel contribute to gender issues. While I have to admit that this made me happy because it supported my arguments, I was also excited by the dialogue itself and felt that this interaction was useful for both of us. I was curious to see how the closeness of our ideologies will look when submitted to a more detailed analysis.

Themes that stood out to me following the interview:

'Ann' is a caretaker.

'Ann' identified fragmentation of political movements, fragmentation amongst groups of women, and fragmentation in general as an important issue that stalls change and action in general.

* Next meeting I planned to bring an interesting quote to 'Ann' about a definition for feminism.

7/15/03-1:00p.m.-I left a message for 'Ann' at her work number to let her know that the analysis was going well and that I would like to set up our second meeting. I asked if she would be able to meet the following week, either Tuesday or Friday after work (as we did for first meeting) or other times as convenient for 'Ann.'

7/15/03-3:50 p.m.- 'Ann' left a message for me stating that I have chosen the week of her vacation ('Ann' mentioned that she would be taking a vacation some time in July during our first interview) but could meet the following week when she returned. She said that Tuesday after work would be best for her.

7/16/03-2:30 p.m.-I left a message to confirm the Tuesday, July 29, 2003 appointment for 4:30 p.m. I wished her well on her trip and requested that she confirm the meeting time by returning my call.

7/17/03 3:30 p.m. 'Ann' returned my call and confirmed that she could meet on Tuesday, July 29, 2003 after work (approximately 4:30 p.m.). I told 'Ann' that I was very excited about the analysis and looked forward to sharing it with her. 'Ann' commented that she thought of even more examples of gender being at issue after the interview and was surprised how much had come up. I wished her well for her upcoming vacation, and we agreed to meet on Tuesday.

7/29/03-4:20-6:00 p.m. Second Session- 'Ann' and I greeted each other in front of her place of work and she led me to a conference room closer to her office space than the previous room. Again 'Ann' and I both worked full days prior to meeting with each other. We began with me giving 'Ann' a copy of the individualized narrative and the subsequent analyses for each of the five readings. We focused exclusively on the

narrative, with 'Ann' reading this and offering verbal feedback instead of writing it down. Most of 'Ann's' feedback consisted of elaborating on stories that we discussed previously, though she also brought up a few points of contention and we discussed this as well. Following this session we walked out together and agreed to meet over the phone when the finalized narrative was complete. I gave 'Ann' copies of the transcription of our first interview, the five analyses, a copy of the individualized narrative and the definition of feminism that we had talked about at the end of our previous meeting. 'Ann' and I talked about enjoying our meeting and we hugged just before going off to separate cars.

Following this meeting, I again am struck by 'Ann's' willingness to be so forthright and generous sharing her experiences. Following this meeting it became even clearer the amount of suffering that 'Ann' has had to endure due to oppressive dynamics of the present culture.

8/14/03-I sent 'Ann's' individualized account by mail. I included a note to clarify that I would call her in about a week to see if she received the narrative and to discuss and /or arrange a time to discuss her reactions to the "almost finalized" narrative.

8/21/03-7:15 p.m.- I tried to reach 'Ann' by phone but was unable to leave a message at either her work number or her home phone. I decide to wait to contact her the following week because I do not want to be intrusive by calling over the weekend.

8/25/03-8:00 p.m.-I called and reached 'Ann' and we agreed to talk the following day at the same time because she wanted to review the account again since she read it quickly when she was tired.

8/26/03-8:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.- 'Ann' and I spoke about the account. Overall, 'Ann' was very pleased with the account and spoke about the research being important and rejuvenating. I thanked 'Ann' several times and told her how to access the complete dissertation. We ended our conversation by wishing each other well in the future.

Contact and Reflection Log Participant “Samantha”

6/10/03 6:00p.m.-Potential participant ‘Samantha’ called and we were able to quickly set up a time to meet the upcoming Friday-(6/13/03) following her work day. ‘Samantha’ sounds eager to participate. She saw the flyer posted in an employee area where she works. She knows the acquaintance who posted the flyer in this location. ‘Samantha’ eagerly explained to me that she liked to participate in research and was interested in my study. While on the phone, ‘Samantha’ talked of her interest in offering help to researchers and also mentioned that she was interested in gender issues. She mentioned her desire to help me out several times. This eagerness and desire to be helpful is likely to be linked to her friendship with our mutual acquaintance. She is likely to want to be helpful and supportive of this acquaintance even though she dismissed concern when I explained that this acquaintance was only involved in so far as posting flyers. Theme of helping and supporting others seems strong for ‘Samantha’. ‘Samantha’ also mentioned that she was telling others about the project and encouraging them to participate. I thank ‘Samantha’ for her interest and express eagerness to meet up. I also explain the time commitment to the project-2 face to face meetings that are audio-taped and one phone interview that is not audio-taped. She dismisses this and says it is no problem. I feel confident that this participant will follow through with the project and feel excited that I am beginning the whole data collection process! Yey!

6/13/03 - 2:30 p.m.-While I am making the final preparations to meet with my very first participant I receive a phone call from ‘Samantha’ who is on her way home from work because she was physically attacked by a patient. She reluctantly, with many apologies, tells me that she will not be able to meet today because she is in pain. She also tells me that she is leaving for vacation out of town the following day and thus will not be able to meet for at least another week. She expresses concern that this will delay my project but I dismiss this as secondary. I thank her for letting me know and note that I look forward to meeting with her at another time. She tells me that she will call me as soon as she returns from vacation. I am very disappointed about this. Of course I do not feel upset with the participant, but I am feeling stalled in my project and am disappointed that I will not have any data to begin working with over the weekend as I had planned.

6/26/03-5:15p.m. – ‘Samantha’ calls to set up an appointment and right away notes that the following day would be fine as was the previous Friday appointment following work. We agreed on the same time-5:00 p.m. and same place- ‘Samantha’s’ place of work. ‘Samantha’ expresses empathy for not being able to follow through on our first scheduled appointment and apologizes again. I am feeling hopeful that this will take place and feel a little less pressured since I have already met with another potential participant.

6/27/03-4:44p.m. - I arrived and sat in the car. I was excited about meeting ‘Samantha’ because of her eagerness during our phone conversations and because of the fact that this meeting will symbolize that I have two participants right now. I really hope things work out, although I still feel anxious and am aware that I do not want to be too confident about the participant’s willingness to follow through with full participation as needed. I

try to assuage these fears as I am greeted by the “participant” who has come out of the building to look for me at about **4:50 p.m.** I am aware that I have not given her a description of me, or the car, but she waves and smiles right away.

6/27/03—Approximately 5:00p.m. - 6:10p.m We met in ‘Samantha’s’ office alone since all of the other office mates have left for the evening. We were surrounded by other desks of other employees and were occasionally interrupted by messages for staff over the loud intercom system.

6/27/03-6:20 p.m. ‘Samantha’ and I finished the interview. Following this, we spoke about her incident of being hit by a patient and her general misgivings about her job at the hospital. I reminded participant ‘Samantha’ about the second interview, specifically that it would be in about a month. I felt good about this interview. The content seemed much different than my first interview and I hoped that this would reflect the diversity of the participants. I also hope that this difference will highlight the plurality of voice that is important. I am also wondering how the fact that I feel that we differ in terms of perspectives will show up upon closer analysis of the data.

Themes that emerge as I reflected on the interview:

‘Samantha’s’ discussion about gender ideology seems based on personal incidents that become thematized on occasion but are not part of an ongoing, thematized narrative that is present for ‘Samantha’ on a daily basis.

‘Samantha’ also emphasized racial issues and the difficulties attending to issues of marginalization.

8/5/03-7:00 p.m.-I left a message for ‘Samantha’ letting her know that I had finished the first draft of the analysis and was ready to meet for our second interview. I noted that I would try to call again, while also leaving my number so that she could return my call.

8/6/03-6:30 p.m. - I reached ‘Samantha’ by phone and we set up our next interview for 8/8/03 at 5:00 p.m. We agreed to meet in the same way as the previous meeting. I am looking forward to meeting with ‘Samantha’ again, and am happy to be at this stage in the analysis process with a willing participant.

8/8/03-5:00 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.-Second meeting- ‘Samantha’ and I met in the same office and assume the same seats as the first meeting. Again, ‘Samantha’ has just completed a day at work, and I have spent the day preparing for our meeting and working on various aspects of my dissertation. Fridays are my days off from clinical work. ‘Samantha’s’ pace was quick throughout the interview. She came across less ambivalent about her attributions of oppression with race and gender. We were able to talk about our racial difference which was exciting because it seemed to help us to gain a clearer perspective of each other. Race was a dominant theme of marginalization again, and I hope to show this in the narrative revisions. We agreed at the end of the interview that I would send her the revised individualized narrative in the next few weeks.

8/13/03-I sent off 'Samantha's' individual account in the mail. I included a note to clarify that I would call in a week or so to see if she received the narrative and to discuss, and/or arrange a meeting time to discuss her reactions to the "almost finalized" narrative. The quick turnaround was not indicative of ease with integration. Instead I felt that I needed to reconstruct the narrative, particularly because I did not feel that it was very well organized. After a lot of work, and the inclusion of 'Samantha's' feedback, I believed that this was a very rich account.

8/19/03-9:30 p.m.- 10:00 p.m.-Third meeting-phone contact- 'Samantha' called me after receiving and reviewing the individualized account that emerged after our first two meetings. 'Samantha' dismissed my gratitude about calling me instead of waiting for me to reach her. She was focused and noted that she marked a few places that she wanted to discuss and set about doing so. I thanked 'Samantha' several times and expressed my gratitude for her being an ideal participant because of her reliability and willingness to share her stories. I also informed her of the procedure to acquire the finished dissertation, and reminded her to call me if she had any concerns over the next few weeks. She dismissed concerns and we ended our relationship. I am grateful to 'Samantha' for her dedication to this project.

APPENDIX B

First Interview Transcripts

Transcription from Interview 1, Participant Ann-June 24, 2003 4:40pm-5:45 pm

Key: PA= Participant Ann

R= Researcher Erin

RR = Researcher Reflections will be labeled (**RR**) and *italicized*.

// =Interruptions and/or talking over each other.

Line #	Dialogue
1	R: uhh hope this works we did a test run before go ahead, so uhh we did consent forms um can't think of
2	anything else umm time commitments, ok so one thing we didn't address yet is the second meeting, I'm
3	anticipating that that will take place just looking at the time so I can figure out when I need to flip the
4	tape, ok um the second interview giving me time to transcribe I'm anticipating will take place in about a
5	month,...is that going to be ok?
6	PA: (inaudible)- <i>nods head</i>
7	R: ok, um lets see. .of the other thing I wanted to add about that is that I will make some changes based on
8	your feedback but some changes I may not make. But I will put, will always put in the transcript or in the
9	final study about what you said, ok, so that's always going to be documented whether I change it or not.
10	Ok,..uh so lets see, I think that's about it in terms of that kind of stuff....
11	PA: <i>nods head</i>
12	R: Ok! lets start out maybe with my big question here...um so actually let me get some background
13	information first... um ok what is your full name?
14	PA: Ann ----
15	R: How do you spell that?
16	PA:-----
17	R: OK..and how old are you?
18	PA: 45
19	R: Ok and I guess what is your job or your degree in?
20	PA: social work
21	R: And what degree do you hold?
22	PA: MSW
23	R: ok where did you take your gender course and what kind of course was it?
24	PA: It was in undergraduate course it was the college up the road, the State College
25	R: uh huh, and how long...and when was that?
26	PA: in the seventies between '74 and '79.////like I said it was a long time ago
27	R: //// uh huh....OK
28	R: And what was the title of the course, do you remember?///
29	PA: women's studies
30	R: (<i>Pause</i>) Ok....Great.....Ok... what is your race and or ethnicity?
31	PA: Uhh Caucasian..I 'spose ..Italian (laugh)
32	R: you say you 'spose?
33	PA: uh huh (laugh//)
34	R: //Laugh) ok what about religion..anything you identify with?
35	PA: (sigh) I was raised Catholic I don't practice.///. I don't...// I have difficulties with it.
36	R://uh huh
37	R: so you have ideological difficulties with it?
38	PA: Yes..(laugh) I'm spiritual // but (smirk)
39	R: uh huh//
40	R: Ok.....Ok.....Ok!.....um I think that's good ..if I can come up with any more questions about that I
41	guess I'll come back to it...Tell me..I guess I'd like to start right out...Tell me of experiences in which
42	gender has been an issue... for you.// Anything whatever comes to mind
43	PA: hmmm//
44	PA: That would have to be just about every part of life//...um uh geez.now I'm drawing a blank of
45	course.
46	R://umhm

47	PA:um ..actually ..very early on..when I was even in like grammar school I think..maybe it was .high
48	school. .I applied for a part time job at a pharmacy. And they just wanted after school help and they
49	turned me down because I was a girl! (smirk)//
50	R: Wow!
51	PA: Yeah! (laugh) and um hm I guess this actually was in the day of civil rights because there was a
52	commission and I called them//
53	R: wow!
54	PA: And I told them that and they set it up so that they could also try to apply for this job and they were
55	told they were only hiring males so.. what they had to do was they had to offer me the job um as a result
56	of that..
57	R: um...wo..ok..How old were you?
58	PA: (sigh).. around twelve.
59	R: you were about twelve!
60	PA: yeah..
61	R: And you called the commission?
62	PA: yeah.. uh..I don't ...well.. I don't know how I knew that.but I did, probably a sign I guess cause I
63	used to go to the Catholic Youth Organization and they always had little boards up, I don't know if that's
64	where I saw it//
65	R: uh huh//
66	R: but you felt strongly about this..it sounds like.. from a young age?
67	PA: Yeah..Yeah.
68	R: Why do you think that is?
69	PA: um.. well I was raised I think um by a single parent and ..um.she was//
70	R: your mother//
71	PA: yeah.. she was always saying like I could do anything and um//
72	R: uh huh//
73	PA: and not to take anything (laughs) from anyone//
74	R: uh huh//
75	PA: so I think that kinda set the tone for me?
76	R: um hm
77	PA: um so I think that's what got me started//
78	R: that's a great story..yeah..
79	PA: (laughs0
80	R: yeah
81	PA: I forgot all about that!
82	R: uh huh...but I think it came to you right when I asked that...so that was a big one..
83	PA: yeah..I'm trying to think of other times..alright ya know just that...ya know..off the top of my head
84	its really tough//
85	R: yeah//.
86	PA: um but there have been way numerous times that a..ya know..gender has been ..played a role..//
87	R: uh huh//
88	PA:// Actually I 've also..I spent a lot of years as an investigator for division of family services in their
89	institutional abuse unit and I used to investigate sex abuse//
90	R: uh huh//
91	PA: and physical abuse but um a lot of times with law enforcement and gender would play a big role in
92	that um
93	R: umhm in that, yeah, a big role cause I know of some stories where the man is automatically taken away
94	and they don't look at the female and a lot of issues with that.//
95	PA: // um hm and also like law enforcement will be stronger with a male perpetrator ya know ..will say
96	things to them//
97	R: um hm//
98	PA:Yeah and they kinda let the ladies out the room kinda thing//
99	R: um hm
100	PA:so theres always that standard going on...um
101	R: um hm. So how was that for you working in that? So you're working with these men... in law

102	enforcement.//you mentioned
103	PA://yeah//, yeah I used to joke because I always knew I could get lunch out of them (laugh)//ya know.
104	R: (laugh)
105	PA: ya know um it was patronizing .ya know.//
106	R://um hm//
107	PA: and to some..to some extent, and I had to be like mentally ready for.. ok I'm dealing with these guys
108	today so//
109	R: So when when you say that, like be mentally ready, like what did you do? What did you kinda of,
110	What. I guess .when I'm hearing you say that I guess you had to accept a certain degree of//
111	PA: um hm//
112	R: patronizing...behavior//
113	PA: um hm..let them take the lead..or ya know acquiesce at certain times//
114	R: uh huh//
115	PA: um even if I knew more about a particular instance//
116	R: uh huh//
117	PA: ya know I may not even say it..or If I would say it I wouldn't ya know get utilized anyway//
118	R: uh huh.. so How did you feel in that role? Uh given that at age twelve you're calling the commission
119	and
120	PA:um..it's just kind of an acceptance I guess.. the way it is //
121	R: yeah//
122	PA: ya know... it doesn't make it right its just the way it is.
123	R: Yeah....You mentioned your mother before..how.. what and you said she would tell you. You could
124	do anything . Do you think she lived that out herself or that she identified.. with those ideas?
125	PA: (pause) um...(sigh) to a degree actually there's also a sad side to that.but.um.she yeah um I mean she
126	left my father..um.. voluntarily because she wasn't happy and um she took me and my two sisters ya know
127	//
128	R: //um hm//
129	PA:um and decided to make a life of her own (voice raised in a lilt)and worked very hard //
130	R: umhm//
131	PA: ya know as a waitress and things like that um to support us ...so I mean it wasn't no glamour...uh.
132	but she wanted her own//
133	R: um hm//
134	PA: ya know, she wanted to just..just do her own thing//
135	R: um hm//
136	PA: So, um I guess, I guess to that extent ya know um.. (trails off).
137	R: But you sound... you sound like there's some hesitance uh
138	PA: Well my mother also..my ..she died of alcoholism so that was the other side of it//
139	R: umm
140	PA: yeah, I think being..I wonder.. I did wonder in the past. That being her age with three children and ya
141	know the waitressing job, ya know she used to work like three jobs when she was functioning//
142	R: um hm//
143	PA: Ya know what a tremendous ...job task that was ya know..//
144	R: uh huh
145	PA: ya know um..so (sigh) Yeah, so in some ways yeah she did pursue her own thing but I think she also
146	(voice trails off a little) let it destroy her// (clears voice).
147	R://umhm//
148	Pause (Ann makes a smirk)
149	R: yeah (in a low voice) that's interesting.
150	R: What role do you think your gender played in choosing your career? If any?
151	PA: Well (sigh).... I think actually it probably played a big role um my undergraduate was in criminal
152	justice//
153	R://umhm//
154	PA: (sigh) I was interested in criminal justice but (voice trailing off) theres a big story behind that and
155	(voice raises) that also was so male oriented ..I did um I did originally try out for State Police and at the
156	time I was too much of a smoker and (laugh)//

157	R: //umhm (laugh)//
158	PA: I wasn't in good shape myself..so I wasn't really in shape enough to do that..um so I probably always
159	geared toward the helping profession..ok but um//
160	R: um hm//
161	PA: So I think social work.I also...it was probably in high school that I kinda more wanted to help people//
162	R: umhm//
163	PA: and you know whether or not it was because I was a woman..probably played a big role but not a real
164	conscious one//
165	R: yeah..it wasn't something you thought of oh ok this is what I'll do//
166	PA: //exactly.. yeah//
167	PA: But then when you get into the field of social work and you realize it is all women..actually theres' a
168	whole demeaning I think.. career field because um people kinda think you go into social work because
169	you can't do other things or//
170	R: //interesting//
171	PA: umhm or its just housewives looking for something to do or ya know//
172	R: So Talk about that a little bit more about that..that's interesting.
173	PA: About?
174	R: About what you just said...about that..that theres a demeaningness to it .. to that also.. that people think
175	theres nothing else you can do or..//
176	PA: Well I think a lot of social work, even in the early days where a lot of people were maybe housewives
177	where they started.. they played a very significant role in helping um... poor people and other people in
178	need. Um . and they had the time I guess to devote ya know ...to the outside..um but it kinda became
179	very stereotypical ...um I remember when I first started um in my first job I was like...in welfare and..
180	they talked about white glove social work and... you were supposed to be like an inspector ya know you
181	go into the house with a white glove and see if theres dust and ya look under the beds to see if theres a
182	man (voice raised slightly) //
183	R: um hm//
184	PA: Ya know and yet it was only a woman's role to do that//
185	R: wow.
186	PA: and even in social work and early on you would see the males in the administrative roles //
187	R: //um hm//
188	PA: I think it's kinda gotten a little bit better...I think (sniff) recently...I guess.. better than what it was
189	when I started out (sniff)
190	R:uh huh.. what attitudes do you get from people when you say what you do?
191	PA: (laugh) um (sigh) I think a lot of people kinda pooh pooh you ya know//
192	R: um hm//
193	PA: And some people say Oh (exaggerated)well ya know the world needs people like you .. and oh
194	good you can do it ya know and (laughs) //
195	R: //um hm (laugh)
196	PA: that kinda thing
197	R: Wow So even though you have a masters degree its still looked at as oh (exaggerated) isn't that cute//
198	PA: um hm
199	R: um cause I say, right away from you and your interest in doing this study..I wondered about that how
200	much in terms of gender issues and and feminist things and whatever cause it seems um//
201	PA: um hm
202	R: It seems like its strong//
203	PA: um hm
204	R: But I wonder//
205	PA: um hm..its interesting cause when I realized that you know..when you might want people with more
206	recent experience I was thinking about my days in the woman's study class and how we used to have the
207	women's study center on campus and (sniff)how we used to havea... soup every day, like a soup lunch ya
208	know and we ..it was just a gathering place..//
209	R://Oh that's neat!//
210	PA: um hm yeah it was a warm supportive atmosphere ya know it was a real nice gathering place//
211	R: um hm//

212	PA: and um I don't see things like that..not any more//
213	R: uh huh
214	PA: I don't know if they still exist or not//
215	R: Um..So was that part of your interest in doing this? Are you wanting to do that//?
216	PA: //um..um it was partly because of the social worker ..I've had to do research and things ..and I just felt
217	that people who do research (laughs) need help//
218	R:/(laugh) that's true (both laughing) absolutely true
219	PA: So I though about that.(inaudible).not that much sweat off my nose um (laughs)
220	R: um hm..I appreciate that..its true..um hm
221	PA: laughs
222	R: but also ...can you say a little...um ..its really interesting what your saying about the women's um you
223	know on campus..how you have this whole kind of center whatever..can you talk a little bit more about
224	that?
225	PA: We had a room probably half .well maybe this big or a little bit bigger (gesturing to the hospital
226	conference room we are in) it was like a drop in //
227	R: um hm//
228	PA: type of center it was called the women's center //
229	R: um hm//
230	PA: and people would go before class after class//
231	R:um hm//
232	PA: to share notes or to just have coffee to have soup..//
233	R: Um hm//
234	PA: //We used to have informal meetings and formal meetings down there ..there'd be people who were
235	say divorced or going through a separation or ya know//
236	R: um hm//
237	PA: // all kinds of all kinds of meetings actually um I just thought of one group um but I'm gonna out
238	myself by telling you this (laugh)
239	R: um hm
240	PA:there was a group I belonged to actually back then and I totally forgot the name of it but it was a
241	lesbian feminist group but that was one of the groups that gathered down there (sniff) ...I totally forgot
242	about that..(smirks)
243	R: What was it like? You said your gonna out yourself.
244	PA: Well because of the lesbian group name//
245	R://right.//
246	PA: um... I don't know. back in that day actually... I think all the women who were at the women's
247	center..for the most part. were united. These days//
248	R: //um hm//
249	PA: its been my experience that theres more, their more split like .. even in u m in NOW its like well this
250	is the lesbian faction this is the straight faction ..and it wasn't like that back then. Lesbians were supported
251	and worked with straight women and vice versa everyone had the same issues //
252	R: //um hm//
253	RR: I actually do not agree that everyone has or had the same issues so I think that its interesting that I
254	"um hm'd" this part.
255	PA:// and I think that has that split..
256	R: So now you feel kinda more the weight of the label that's what that's what I was thinking actually
257	when you said now I'm gonna out myself.//
258	PA: //um hm
259	R: yeah..so its kinda like right away when you say oh (exaggerated) since you say that you belong to a
260	lesbian organization so right away that must be who you are//
261	PA: um hm//
262	R: and that's one more label slapped on you.
263	PA: um hm
264	R: like woman//
265	PA: yeah...yeah//
266	R: like ya know..//

267	PA: and actually.I mean,...it wasn't like.....actually it was great ..back then it was nobody..you didn't
268	even know//
269	R: //um hm//
270	PA: Unless someone was identified like in a group like... who was what (exaggerated)....like it didn't
271	even matter//
272	R://um hm// So you think that's changed in some kinda way?
273	PA: I think so. (pause)
274	R: What do you think that's about?
275	PA: I don't know if we just got more into ourselves as a society or what um ya know like people are
276	more into labels//
277	R: um hm//
278	PA: (under breath) I don't know.. like even when you asked me my race ya know//
279	R://um hm.
280	PA: um ..that has always been a tough one I mean I've always been white but..uh..but that's always been
281	like an issue to me.
282	R: What do you mean?
283	PA: Well um because ah well I don't even know how to describe it but um I had had to interview a lot of
284	people in a lotta a lot of my roles and um I 've watched Black people go from negroes to Black to
285	African American to African to and now theres even more I'm Caribbean African and theres just more
286	and more separation and ya know identification and that that's how it was as being white. When I was a
287	kid we moved when my mother left my father we went from one area to down around this other
288	neighborhood. In my area I was the darkest thing they ever saw//
289	R:// Really (sympathetic tone)
290	<i>(RR Ann is identifying a shift towards feminists splits that is new, while also identifying splits in racial</i>
291	<i>groups that has been ongoing for a longer period of time as indicated in her narrative that racial splits</i>
292	<i>were identified readily in her childhood)</i>
293	PA: Yeah..and they used to call me Puerto Rican Nigger (laugh) and I think see this is why race //
294	R://uh huh
295	PA: // has played a big impact on my life because I 've always been sensitive and aware of what that does
296	to people//
297	R: uh huh//
298	PA: So I think that might have also led me to into uh ya know being a social worker too//
299	R: uh huh//
300	PA: So that's..that's kinda where that stems from ah
301	R: um hm um yeah..no I think that's really good That's really helpful what you're saying. I mean coming
302	up with all these different things kind of the cross section of being marginalized //
303	PA: um hm.
304	R: //coming up and that you've been really aware of those experiences for yourself//
305	PA: yeah//
306	R:// and that its also from those experiences that you've had about yourself you kinda goes on to other
307	people kinda see, feel, maybe empathize//
308	PA: uh huh//
309	R://where other people are also//
310	PA: //Absolutely!
311	R: Yeah, and how that all fits together. That's really interesting..ya know.....So you mean..you were
312	saying about your gender focused course that you were thinking about that. What are your thoughts
313	about that when you look back?
314	PA: Um just how things have changed over the years. And (sigh). It seemed like it was (sigh) a lot more
315	... I don't know it seems like back then (sigh) it was a long way to go to get equal rights and//
316	R://um hm//
317	PA: but it seemed like were..things were possible//
318	R:// um hm//
319	PA:but yet Roe v. Wade.. nothing new has happened//
320	R:// uh huh..uh huh//
321	PA:// ya know//

322	R://uh huh//
323	PA://and they ‘ve been trying to reverse that! Ya know?
324	R: Yes!
325	PA: So (laugh) I think..I don’t think the um I don’t think we’re really where we should be ya know
326	(laugh)!
327	R: Where do you think we should be?
328	PA: um. Well...I don’t think we’ll ever... be.. equal. Ya know.. <i>(RR: I did not follow up with a uh huh</i>
329	<i>or um hm as I typically have. Probably because I do not hold this view, particularly that there are</i>
330	<i>innate differences or strengths which is the way I interpret PA’s comments about each “sex” having</i>
331	<i>their strengths.)</i> um.. I think.. there are different roles or different strengths for both sexes and abilities
332	and things like that but um I don’t think we’ll ever recognize//
333	R: Umm//
334	PA:// each other as equal (sniff) even when I had to..when I worked with cops I said I can get lunch out
335	of this guy ya know..ya know ..so I (laugh)//
336	R: um hm..um hm//
337	PA: //Ya know you just kinda learn your role and you play//
338	R://um hm..um hm..
339	PA://You play your game //
340	R://um hm//
341	PA://and uh ya know that isn’t how life should be//
342	R://um hm//
343	PA:// but it is
344	R://um hm
345	PA: there’s the whole glass ceiling thing ya know//
346	R://um hm
347	PA:Like even in social work except that there’s more women in administration than there used to be but
348	ya know//
349	R: But!
350	PA: But even so.
351	R: and you’re aware of it?
352	PA: Yeah
353	R: Cause that’s the thing cause it still stands out//
354	PA: //yeah//
355	R: as different //
356	PA: //yeah//
357	R: and odd in some way.
358	PA:And yeah and that’s the same way in most businesses and things.
359	R: um hm
360	PA: And then..People...women that ya know women that raise kids that leave the work force to raise kids
361	yeah again.. its ya know its seen as the women’s role to do that //
362	R: um hm
363	PA:Ya know . Its never gonna be seen as... Who should go //
364	R://um hm//
365	PA: Ya know Who..who better can better ya know either parent or who can better leave the work field
366	ya know for the time being//
367	R: //um hm//
368	PA: to better raise the children.//
369	R: um hm.....um hm//
370	PA:Ya know it’ll never be like that.
371	(Pause)
372	R: That’s interesting. That’s really interesting...umm..... (mumbling under breath –what did I wanna
373	ask)....So our work is a um (inaudible) I mean its just it feels like its not gonna change or you feel that
374	it hasn’t changed. Do you feel like theres been a real down.. in terms of....kinda energy? Around like
375	women’s issues?
376	PA: Yeah..I think women started turning on themselves..to..to some extent.

377	R: uh huh
378	PA: um..ya know and I don't know like what's what's behind it. If it's a big ya know um big
379	conservatism plot or ya know that started all this.
380	R: um hm
381	PA: but it kinda started with the factions ya know and and like oh well ya know lesbians//
382	R:// um huh//
383	PA: shouldn't be part of this ther're just trying to get re-cruits and that kinda stuff. um and It's just more
384	like....well..People used to be...I think..ah now..and I don't mean way back then but ...people.. don't
385	wanna say, women don't wanna say I'm a feminist You rarely!(emphasized) hear/// (I interrupt PA and
386	talk over her here) (RR: I talk over PA here. This is probably because I am glad she brings this point
387	up because I feel this is an important point as argued in my introduction)
388	R: I was just gonna ask about that//
389	PA: You Rarely hear people say that..ya know//
390	R: Yes!
391	PA: And if you do they make an excuse//
392	R: yeah.//
393	PA: // as to why they're feminist.
394	R: um hm
395	PA: It's like it's a dirty word!
396	R: Yeah...Where do you think that comes from?
397	PA (sigh) Again I think ..I don't know who's behind it (laugh) or where it started//
398	R: //yeah//
399	PA: But I think that what happened was they started looking at it if it was ya know conservative or a
400	religious ya know.. that it was all the abortion stuff//
401	R: //um hm//
402	PA: //ya know//ahh..that it was..they are bad people they're feminists ya know they wanna have
403	abortions.
404	R:um hm
405	PA: They wanna kill babies all over the place//
406	R://um hm//
407	PA: and y a know they wanna be lesbians
408	R: um hm
409	PA: they wanna take your jobs away ya know//
410	R: um hm//
411	PA:// there's a whole economic thing.. (sniff)
412	Pause
413	R: Yeah absolutely Oh I agree. I do.
414	PA: It's very threatening I guess. Ya know in a lotta ways.
415	R: uh huh. Yeah..yeah.. And you..I... I really liked what you said about people give an excuse like you
416	said or an explanation they can't just leave it.
417	PA: uh huhuh huh.
418	R: yeah..
419	PA: I'm feminist because (sarcastic tone) or ah ya know
420	R: uh huh ...uh huh...
421	PA: I'm a feminist about this...ya know (sarcastic tone)
422	R: uh huhuh..huh...(laugh) but not about this!! Not this!
423	PA: uh huh (laugh) yeah right!
424	R: Again that differentiation and how much that plays a role//
425	PA: uh huh...uh huh.
426	R: yeah..that's really interesting.
427	PA: (sniff) (clears voice).
428	R: That's really interesting... but how do you feel like umwith your sexual orientation where do you
429	think that kinda comes into this..We haven't talked much about that.
430	PA: That plays a very big role. I think..
431	R: um hm.

432	Pause
433	PA: Well yeah ah even in terms of the feminism and um. Yeah. honestly..you can't say..Well I have to
434	say probably the feminism came first because I didn't really (laugh) come out until college//
435	R: um hm//
436	PA: So there I was calling civil rights at (laugh)//
437	R: //um hm//
438	PA: at twelve. So um It's always played a big role. .um (<i>I wonder if PA thought that callin a gender</i>
439	<i>commission at the age of twelve was remarkable prior to discussing this in the interview because she</i>
440	<i>seemed struck by this when I originally commented on this and then refers back to it at this point in the</i>
441	<i>interview. This suggests to me that the interview may have evoked some excitement or alignment with</i>
442	<i>the feminist movement).</i>
443	PA: It's.. It's also been something I had to be careful with too//
444	R: //um hm What do you mean?
445	PA: Well ...I guess..ya know even in terms of my employment. Like with ..with working police and
446	things like that like.. working with police and things like that..um what they wanna hear..um..//
447	R://Can you talk a little bit about that like or and describe an experience that you're thinking of?
448	PA: UmWell right away people ask: Are you married? Do you have kids? Ya know//
449	R: //um hm//
450	P:...//working with detectives and things like that ya know they just assume right away//
451	R://Oh yeah! (RR: Right away I affirm this statement even though I do not know this experience. I
452	guess I was wanting to show support for PA. Perhaps show her that I did not endorse the
453	marginalization.)
454	PA: And..I don't know (very low voice)..(sigh) its just I'm just always well ya don't like. I (emphasis)
455	don't make people uncomfortable. Like I don't like even when I said I outed myself , ya know//
456	R: //uh huh//
457	PA: I don't come in and say hey! Ya know//
458	R: //uh huh//
459	PA: //I'm here..ya know//
460	R: //uh huh//
461	PA: // and I'm a little bit different...um
462	R: So you feel like uh...like that (inaudible) (both PA and I seem to be gesturing)
463	PA: Oh yeah you get viewed as different...oh yeah..//
464	R: //yeah..//
465	R: You don't want to make other people uncomfortable?
466	PA: Yeah.. (voice trailing) well and partly..I'm sure its because of my own //
467	R: //um hm//
468	PA: discomfort with their disdain or whatever. And for the most part I mean.. ya know..//
469	R: //um hm//
470	PA: people who I don't actually say this to ya know I can make people know//
471	R: //um hm//
472	PA: // It's just Its kind of an accepted thing to//
473	R://um hm//
474	PA: ya know even some of the people that I work with now that ya know that I'm very friendly with but I
475	know that they don't really want to hear about that part of my life (laugh) (voice lower).
476	R: Really? (empathic tone)
477	PA: So yeah.
478	R: How do you feel about that?
479	PA: I think it stinks!
480	R: yeah.
481	PA: And I don't think that's something that's ever gonna change..Not in my lifetime.
482	R: um hm.
483	PA: um
484	R: How do you deal with that? That you feel so much that way but it's not gonna change and whole parts
485	of your life.. even people who you are very close friends with you can't even talk about //
486	PA: //um hm//

487	R: I mean..huge parts of your life outside of your job!
488	PA: yeah ..It's unfortunate but ya know its also something that I've been dealing with since ya know
489	R: yeah.
490	PA: Since I came out. So.
491	R: yeah.
492	PA: Well.. ya know..I mean..even parts of my family ya know..they know I have a partner but do
493	they..they don't ever ask about her they would never ask what's going on.
494	R: wow.
495	PA: Like if I bring her up in conversation//
496	R: //um hm//
497	PA: they'll listen but(laugh) ya know
498	R: um hm
499	PA: But if it's like that with your family..ya know//
500	R: //um hm//
501	PA: It's certainly....
502	R: That's really tough.
503	PA: then for the rest of society to come along then (smirk)
504	R: um hm
505	PA: (sniff)
506	R: And it sounds like I mean..at times like you've been very active about it..I mean continue to be very
507	active..I mean doing this is is something also//
508	PA:// um hm//
509	R:// Really
510	PA: I used to march in gay pride parades and ya know//
511	R: um hm//
512	PA: back in NY and they'd have like roof tops full of cameras//
513	R:// um hm//
514	PA: and like Hi! (laugh)
515	R: Have you done that?
516	PA: Oh yeah, like back in the seventies and ya know//
517	R://What about now? Are you still active?
518	PA: Once in a while I go in ..um not as active as I used to be (voice gets lower) ya know..and there's no
519	formal ..group meetings or anything like that..anymore
520	R:um hm
521	PA: but yeah..well like last year I was living in another state (name edited) and had gone to gay pride the
522	past two years there (RR: PA was more active last year when she was with partner, I wonder how this
523	effected decision to be more active?) I was going to go to the one in state (deleted)
524	R: um hm
525	PA: just to see how it was but the weather was so awful.
526	R: What about your partner how is she about this stuff?
527	PA: See this is the hard part, my partner lives in (state named) and this is part of what happened was I
528	have lived here most of my life I moved there about three years ago um thinking that I could start a new
529	life there and had difficulty getting into a state system and pension system and everything and just kinda
530	decided I just had too many years in here//
531	R: um//
532	PA:// And because we..Are (emphasis) lesbians and there isn't domestic partnership and there is no each
533	other's pension and things like that I came back and made the decision to come back and put my years in.
534	R: um hm
535	PA: So she's up there and I'm here and we have a long distance//
536	R://wow!
537	PA: relationship. But that all has to do with our sexual orientation because (sarcastic tone) ya know
538	otherwise we'd be married and ya know//
539	R: //umhm//
540	PA: it wouldn't be an issue.
541	R: um hm..Is she in the state system also?

542	PA: She's not it's along state lines it's ah kinda the transportation authority//
543	R: uh huh.
544	PA: It's a very good job there and um ..
545	R: I know but you said (inaudible) something about the benefits issue?
546	PA: um hm
547	R: Like the benefits issue, that it doesn't just transfer//
548	PA: //uh huh//
549	R: //because of your sexual orientation
550	PA: yeah..and social security...I mean if she dies.. I don't get anything and vice versa//
551	R: uh huh.
552	PA: ya know//
553	R: //uh huh//
554	PA: //so..it's a big thing..
555	R: Yeah..it's huge
556	PA: And that's also one of those things an agenda item that they don't want to see pushed through//
557	R: //uh huh//
558	PA: //I mean they always go to great lengths to make that not happen//
559	R: //uh huh// What about like women's groups do you feel that they've taken up any kind of gay issues
560	or ..we're talking and it's obvious that you feel that theres more and more splits and labels..and
561	whatever//
562	PA: //uh huh//
563	R: and that's part of the issue and I just want to ask about that.
564	PA: Well yeah (sigh) I think they have taken up some of those issues but actually too one of the things
565	that I think happened over the years that wasn't so prevalent in other years..back was the whole
566	transgender issue. I remember back when I was younger bisexuality was a taboo ya know we used to say
567	it was people that couldn't make up their mind//
568	R: um hm//
569	PA: but then the whole movement has accepted bisexuality basically and included them//
570	R: //um hm//
571	PA: //ya know that's the gay and lesbian movement anyway.
572	R: um hm..So you say that's the gay and lesbian movement do you feel that the women's movement cause
573	again there's so many factions//
574	PA: Right! and I think it's kinda split off ya know //
575	R: //yeah//
576	PA: //I think that the women's movement primarily doesn't deal with many gay (emphasis) issues..ya
577	know//
578	R: //Wait and I'm very aware that after I said that like gay issues (exaggerated) that that bothers me
579	because its not gay issues its people//
580	PA: yeah.
581	R: period..ya know and that's part of the factioning..it's these people (emphasized) issues need to be dealt
582	with separately//
583	PA: but that's what we're talkin about with domestic partnership //
584	R: //yeah//
585	PA: //the women's movement doesn't necessarily want to undertake that//
586	R: //yeah//
587	PA: //they're trying to trying to get adequate childcare, //
588	R: //uh huh//
589	PA: they're trying to get (sniff) ya know
590	R: uh huh ...um hm which is right there the heterosexual ity..//
591	PA: //right//
592	R: the child care which is again women's (exaggerated) issues like when I asked you that was one of the
593	things I was interested in when I asked you about what was the title of your course your gender
594	...(exaggerated) focused course.
595	PA: um hm
596	R: Women's studies//

597	PA: Yeah! Um hm Right! That's what I even thought when I even when I saw when the flyer..yeah like
598	oh yeah they call it gender studies now//
599	R: //right ..right//
600	PA: they used to call it women's studies then so .
601	R: but it's always kinda that factioning ya know//
602	PA: //um hm//
603	R: gender studies always automatically assumes women//
604	PA: O f course!..What (exaggerated) men? Are gonna sign up for gender studies? Nooo//
605	R://right ..right right.../// (<i>I affirm this statement, though I remember not quite agreeing or not being</i>
606	<i>sure that PA and I agreed about men's stance or place in gender issues</i>).
607	R: Do you..What role do you think that plays in this..like you said with men like you said that men aren't
608	gonna sign up for that.
609	PA: um um..well..I think that again..It has to be it's it's a stigma it's ya know//
610	R: //um hm//
611	PA: something like that a man knowingly walks into a situation like that knowing ya know (voice lowers
612	in an exaggerated way) and they make a joke.and say Yeah..I signed up for this course because I knew it'd
613	be a great place to meet women ("women" emphasized) and ya know stuff like that //
614	R:// um hm//
615	PA: but even so it wouldn't be something ya know that they'd sit around with a bunch of guys and say
616	Yeah! Ya know I gotta study for my //
617	R://um hm..umhm//
618	PA:// gender studies class..ya know..//
619	R: um hm//
620	PA://..that's ..that's I think rare..//
621	R://um hm..And the idea that if you did say it you'd be heard in this..this patronizing kind of a thing
622	of..That's cute (exaggerated)//
623	PA: (laughs) um hm//
624	R: //And not taken as seriously .
625	PA: um.
626	Pause
627	R: (low voice) That's very interesting....um yeah! Let me see..When you took your course..I don't
628	know..I mean...did it change the way you saw yourself? How you thought through issues?
629	PA: I think it helped empower me.
630	R: Didit?
631	PA: at the time yeah..um.. at the time it helped to see that there was a whole force behind all of this and I
632	was where I was at because...of//
633	R://uh huh//
634	PA:// because of all that had happened before me.
635	R: uh huh
636	PA: um hm
637	R: So you felt a real connection to that?
638	PA: Absolutely!....(voice trails off) yeah.....yeah
639	Pause
640	R: What are you thinking about it seems like your stopping yourself?
641	PA: No I'm I just um am thinking about um ...just actually one of the things that it seemed to its kind of
642	weird (voice lowers) but that to me seemed to go hand in hand the women's movement and the
643	abolitionist movement in the United States..and a ya know//
644	R://um hm//
645	PA:// a lot of the feminist women were also trained to abolish slavery//
646	R://um//
647	PA:// SO it's kinda like they did two things at the same time and//
648	R://umhm..//
649	PA:// and then that's where on of the splits happened too//
650	R://umhm..umhm//
651	PA://so//

652	R:It's interesting ..you want to say more about that?
653	PA: God..I feel like such an old historian (laugh).
654	R: No! You're doing such a great job making these connections!
655	PA: Oh god!
656	R: It's great! But it sounds like when you talk about this that you feel more connected to history//
656a	PA: God..so many years..yeah..it's like amazing! They um I even picture like these paperbacks I've read
657	ya know//
658	R:// um hm//
659	PA:// yeah like Betty Friedan
660	R: What else? What comes to mind in terms of lists?
661	PA: um (sigh) I don't know .. there was something just on the TV last night about Susan B. Anthony and
662	ya know//
663	R://um hm//
664	PA:// and it's like umm she was a very fascinating woman but one of the things was ..her friendship with
665	this other feminist women..I can't think of her first name but last name was Stanton//
666	R://uh huh//
667	PA:// and these letters that she would write to her //
668	R://uh huh//
669	PA:// And how intimate they were and that was one of the points that they were making was that women's
670	letters were much more intimate... not sexual//
671	R:// uh huh uh huh//
672	PA:// and how they always labelled.. what was it Eisenhower's wife..was it Mamie Eisenhower?
673	R: uh huh
674	PA: how people thought she was a lesbian and Roosevelt was a lesbian and it was all because of those
675	letters .
676	R: wow! So you say intimate..like what kind..what kinds of stuff what kinds of things were they saying
677	or what kinds of things//
678	PA: //I..I..don't know (voice rising) um
679	R: Or what kinds of things stood out to you the most?
680	PA: Well um like say.. Susan B. Anthony was saying something about being very weary ya
681	know..fighting for this.ya know.. struggle and I wish you were here with me and I wish.ya know.I could
682	rest my head on your lap..ya know//
683	R://um hm//
684	PA://and ya know but you're home having your sixth child//
685	R:// um hm//
686	PA://And ya know there was that whole acceptance//
687	R://um hm..um hm..
688	PA://thing there but it was just like it would be nice to ya know..
689	R: yeah!//
690	PA: ..to have like a hug like ya know..or something like that..
691	R: So physical closeness without the sexuality immediately attached to it//
692	PA://Yeah! Right!
693	R:That is so interesting yeah..that is such a shift.
694	PA: umhm..
695	R: ya know when you see kinda of um old movies or older people ya know..like Women holding hands//
696	PA://um hm//
697	R:// just with women of course //
698	PA: //Right!//
699	R://With men it was still very separated//
700	PA://Yeah!//
701	R:// But with women you do see that.
702	PA: And if you do ever read any of those letters from //
703	R://umhm//
704	PA:// those women like Eleanor Roosevelt and um..They were very intimate letters//
705	R://umhm//

706	PA: //that they had written so.
707	R: um hmSo It's interesting....What kinds of things have you read? What kinds of things really stand out
708	to you in terms of that?
709	PA: (sigh) Oh God. Um ya know I can't think of titles but kinds of things like you said.
710	R: like authors?
711	PA: Robin Morgan, um Betty Friedan.. god..all of em..Of course..ah what's her name Gloria..
712	R: Steinem
713	PA: Yeah.um I don't know if anyone if she's really considered a feminist but Lilly Tomlin because she's
714	very big//
715	R:// um hm//
716	PA: // she was for a while there um I don't know (under breath)
717	R: So those were a lotta of the I guess what would be considered again another faction ..kinda more
718	political ..issues like the equal rights ..//
719	PA: //Right.
720	R:What about anything else sort of more on the fringe sort of like Radicalesbians more on the
721	fringe..much more very interesting and much more about the whole system and the whole..whole
722	structure being off..
723	PA: umm....um hm//
724	R: Ya know it's not just one issue or ya know or legal issues ya know like saying you should be in the
725	army but a whole political system the whole (inaudible) Have you ever read anyone like that?
726	PA: Well I did but I don't have any titles (sounds apologetic) um um//
727	R://Ok//
728	PA://or anything off hand um but there are people who cut out their tongues who were really radical and
729	ya know really radical//
730	R://um hm//
731	PA: And there are still women who are in those groups ya know and um I've gone to different lesbian
732	factions//
733	R://uh huh//
734	PA: where even I've gone and been like Oh my God I don't think I wanna see ya know (laughs)!
735	R: So you feel put off?
736	PA: uh huh! Yeah! (laugh) but also theres like um (sigh) you just wonder if theres hate for hates sake ya
737	know//
738	R://uh huh//
739	PA://because there could be lesbians who don't like gay men and vice versa and//
740	R://uh huh//
741	PA://and its one thing not to like them but um Even the gay movement got that way for a while ya
742	know..it had to be lesbian first lesbian and gay men //
743	R: umhm//
744	PA://or it's the whole big power thing and that may stem from the women's movement//
745	R://oh..um hm//
746	PA://And the reason.. ya know Women have always been beneath//
747	R: //right...right//
748	PA: //Ya know you can just//
749	R:// But it sounds like the issue there is kinda redoing the hierarchy. But its still a hierarchy?
750	PA: Yeah..um hm.. ya know like they joke about lesbians having meetings for meetings (smirk)
751	R: (laugh) um hm.
752	PA: like having an issue with the issues (laugh)
753	R: but there are..there are so many issues..
754	PA: Yeah.
755	R: Its so complicated..
756	PA: um hm
757	R: Yeah...very good..umm lets see maybe one thing I wanted to follow up on a little bit..maybe I should
758	flip the tape I don't want it to run out.
759	Tape is flipped
760	PA and I discuss transcription and her experience transcribing clinical notes for one of her jobs.

761	Return to discussion:
762	R: Ok so one of the things I wanted to follow up on you said about the gender focused course that it
763	helped you feel empowered..like it helped you connect that there was a movement outside of you//
764	PA://uh huh/
765	R://And it sounds like you also had that experience when you were twelve. Did you .. how bout anything
766	lin between those ages? Like in high school or um?//
767	PA:// high school was a tough time for me..um. because my mother had died and so//
768	R://wow//
769	PA://and so I was kinda like in my own world.
770	R:How old were you?
771	PA: I was ..I was fourteen almost fifteen.(voice trails)//
772	R://uh hm//
773	PA://.my world it did kinda turn upside down//
774	R: //uh huh//
775	PA:Well.. actually..I always was even in high school I played basketball //
776	R: //um hm//
777	PA://so yeah I've always been surrounded by women and ah strong women //
778	R: //um hm//
779	PA://And I've always remained ah maintained friendships with some of those women even from way
780	back then//
781	R:// um hm//
782	PA: So yeah I think I've always relied on women for friendship and support and um things like that.
783	R: Did you find that that it's or been more supportive than any men? Or?
784	PA: (Sigh) Um I think there's a difference but I can't describe the difference//
785	R: //uh huh//
786	PA://Cause actually too. Ya know..I have some very good friendships with gay men//
787	R:// um hm//
788	PA:// that I've been friends with for years and can go through so many things with and all that.
789	R: uh huh.
790	PA: but ya know it is different. Ya know//
791	R://uh huh//,,What do you think is different?
792	PA: um
793	R: I'm glad you bring that up!
794	PA: I don't know ..ya know we recognize there is there are differences um
795	Pause
796	R: What do you think makes it hard to try to come up with that?
797	PA: um//
798	R:// It sounds like you feel that there is a difference//
799	PA:// Cause its ah it's a subtle difference .. but I can't explain it.....
800	R: But you feel that there is one?
801	PA: Yeah ya know like I can pour my soul out to the male friend and I can do that with a woman but I
802	think theres more of an empathetic understanding//
803	R://uh huh//
804	PA:// with a woman than the man can I wanna help and be there or all that but there's kind of a different
805	feeling level or something.. kinda we operate on different levels or something.
806	R: Do you think it's biological?
807	PA: I think it may have a basis(voice raises.
808	R: Do you?
809	PA:ya know I don't know if its biological or if its just our upbringing//
810	R://uh huh//
811	PA://ya know cause it's male female from day one.
812	R: yeah...right.
813	PA: So yeah.
814	R: Literally!
815	PA: yeah.

816	R:yeah
817	PA: Absolutely!
818	R: Yeah cause that's part that's one of the things that I'm interested in looking at..not proving one way or
819	another but I do I kinda lean more towards environment that we //
820	PA://uh hm//
821	R://kinda learn these roles ..every role that we take on we kinda learn and watch and are shaped by other
822	people and ourselves and kinda all of those things I think that's really an interesting thing.
823	PA: Yeah..I was always a tomboy. And it's like.. why was I a tom boy? Because I liked to play?
824	(sarcastic tone) (laugh)
825	R: uh huh ..uh huh..
826	PA: ya ya know?
827	R: uh huh uh huh ya know cause I liked to play the shooting games over the//
828	R://uh huh ..uh huh..//
829	PA://the Barbie doll ya know but //(laugh)
830	R://uh huh// Wha..What were people's thoughts about that when you were little? What would people say?
831	PA: They called me tomboy. I was a tomboy and actually I was called a gypsy because I wondered
832	around ya know and (gasp and a laugh)
833	R: Wow!
834	PA: Yeah!
835	R: Lots of labels.//
836	PA://Yeah! Ya know lots of girls were having tea parties and and things like that. Ya know.
837	R: um hm So it sounds like there was kind of a negativeness in that.//
838	PA://Absolutely! Being a tom boy is not like a good thing..ya know..
839	R: uh huh
840	PA: You're either somebody's son (laugh)or a girl but you're not a tomboy//
841	R://uh huh//... So it sounds like there was shame attached to that?
842	PA: Yeah..yeah there was supposed to be..but I didn't care at the time//
843	R://uh huh//
844	PA://but ya know ..I guess I did to some extent but it didn't stop me//
845	R://But still yeah it didn't stop yourself//
846	PA://yeah
847	R: Where ..Where do you think that comes from for you?
848	PA: Well I was just pursuing the pleasure principle. (laugh).I had more fun ..ya know.
849	R: um hm
850	PA: Um I just had more fun I knew what I liked to do if I liked playing army with the boys or hoops I did
851	that or //
852	R: //uh huh//
853	PA:// I played baseball ..
854	R://um hm//
855	PA://Yeah! I could wear a dress too and play baseball but ya know.
856	R: um hm!
857	PA: I could do both but again as you said it's male or female ya know//
858	R:// um hm..um hm//
859	PA://there had to be a split so.
860	R: So you thought that that you were always making that choice?
861	PA: I had a friend actually .. um when we were younger ..we were very good friends..she had four
862	brothers and ...we were always friends and we always played with the boys and all that but all of a
863	sudden there came a point. Her mother pushed her. Cause we both played basketball. We went to
864	different schools . We both played basketball . And she was going into cheerleading. ..And her mother
865	said you have to give up the basketball now.. that's it.
866	R: Wow.. How old was she or how old were you..when that happened?
867	PA: I was about eleven...ten or eleven Cause I remember like her even saying ya know we can't hang out
868	anymore cause//
869	R://Really!//
870	PA://Yeah (sigh) Cause I kinda have to be in cheerleading now.

871	R: So she couldn't hang out with you?
872	PA: Just rarely..when she didn't have practice..and ya know but it was like her mother was very interested
873	in feminizing her.
874	R: um hm um hm
875	PA:And that was real clear.
876	R: Do you think that the mother had a part in her.. not spending much time with you?
877	PA: Yeah! Yeah.
878	R: um
879	PA: Yeah I mean I don't think she saw me as the threat but it was this is what I have to do with my
880	daughter //
881	R://uh huh//
882	PA:// ya know
883	R: and this is what her daughter has to do to be accepted.
884	PA: Right ..I mean the daughter had to make the brothers beds and things like that.
885	R: Really (tone is lower-sarcastic)
886	PA:They were all older than her but that was her job(sarcastic tone)!
887	R: Wow! Wow. Did you guys ever talk about that when you were little?
888	PA: Yeah! I used to tell her //
889	R: //Did you!//
890	PA://yeah I thought it stunk! Ya know! Oh yeah..but again//
891	R://uh huh ..uh huh...//
892	PA://but again..I had two sisters so I ah didn't really have the perspective//
893	R://uh huh..but it it sounds like you did!
894	PA: but//
895	R://It sounds like you did....you had quite a perspective! That these things stood out to you regardless of
896	Oh (emphasized)this is normal. But things really stood out to you !
897	PA: Yeah..I guess because it was just always told to me that you do for yourself basically.//
898	R://um hm..um hm//
899	PA:// And ya know..I couldn't see ya know..Well whyya know .. do you do for these guys? (laugh) ya
900	know
901	R://um hm//
902	PA://I don't get it (laugh)//
903	R: um hm...How was it like you've mentioned with your mom that there was pressures ya know//
904	PA:um hm//
905	R://for her which in terms of like being divorced..being a divorcee..How do you think that played out?
906	PA: Well that was a stigma for me even too.//
907	R://uh huh//
908	PA:// Like even at the CYL where I used to hang out ya know it would always be a hush hush kinda
909	thing.
910	R: Really (empathic tone)
911	PA: (in a hushed tone) Oh her parents are divorced! Ya know as a matter of fact one of my sister's
912	friends could not play with my sister because her parents were divorced!
913	R:Really (exaggerated tone)
914	PA: Yeah! It was a big stigma back then (voice trailing off).
915	R: wow.
916	PA: Yeah it was..ya know now...It's like ..God..ya know(sarcastic tone)//
917	R://uh huh.
918	PA://it's not a big deal..but yeah..it was a big deal then ..goodness.
919	R: yeah..lot of pressure.....What do your sister's do.I'm just curious..
920	PA: (sarcastic tone) One is a nurse (sigh) and one is an administrative assistant.
921	R: Are you close with them now?
922	PA: not really.
923	R: Really(empathic tone)
924	PA: We're close but we're not close.um..kind of a .I guess we've survived our own ways.
925	R: um hm

926	PA: Actually the one that is the nurse is very religious.
927	R: Really? (empathic tone)
928	PA: Yeah and um very Catholic and we have very a that was one of um a h her beliefs and my opposing
929	beliefs (exaggerated tone) and my feminism..
930	R: um hm..I was just gonna ask that.
931	PA: Yeah.that was um a big split yeah yeah between the two of us and it came to a point that we used to
932	argue ya know ...years ago.. with family....all the time//
933	R://umm//
934	PA://and I just finally said ya know what..Cause everybody was just getting aggravated...Its like you're
935	gonna have different beliefs and//
936	R://Was everyone getting aggravated with you?
937	PA:Yeah. Cause it was upsetting to everybody..we would just argue! She'd argue ya know anti-abortion
938	and I would argue//
939	R://um hm..um hm//
940	PA:// It was just ridiculous! It was like OK! Ya know what..//
941	R://um hm//
942	PA:// Ok! Enough was enough! (laugh) I know what you believe I know what I believe (sniff)..so..//
943	R://um hm..uh huh
944	PA: Ya know ..we're still close as sisters ..I ya.know .actually she had a masectomy a a few years ago
945	and I was the one who went with her and supported her through that //
946	R: //uh huh//
947	PA: I again um taking the supportive a role (laugh)//
948	R://uh huh..uh huh! Yeah..I was gonna say (laugh)//
949	PA:// but ya know..um so we're close on some levels//
950	R://um hm//
951	PA: (in a quiet voice) But we have big differences .
952	R: What about the other sister?
953	PA: The other sister (laugh)It's kinda hard..to say..(laugh) She's kinda like white bread.(laugh) ya know
954	it's like she got married right after..right after my mother died and um and had kids and he's kinda been
955	a jerk(sarcastic tone)
956	R: um hm.
957	PA: But ..but ya know he supports..ya know..they ..support each other they get something out of each
958	other so(sarcastic tone).
959	R: (laugh)Not sure what but somethin! (both laughing) uh huh!
960	PA: right! (laughing) what else and actually I get together with her and say like because she lives in the
961	area oh.lets go for a movie or something ya know.
962	R: uh huh.
963	PA: But um ..
964	R: It's so interesting that ideologically you guys are so different. //
965	PA:// yeah//
966	R://And I say you guys! All of your sisters.
967	PA: uh huh.
968	Pause in conversation when we are interrupted by an employee. I apologize to PA. The employee informs
969	us that the door will lock automatically when we shut it. I thank her for letting us know a few times, and
970	the woman leaves.
971	
972	R: but sorry about that.
973	PA: It's ok no kinda just um me and my sisters on a continuum..with (name deleted) on one end..(name
974	deleted in the middle and here I am.!
975	R: And you're on one end um hm....that's interesting. So uhh. That's really interesting..even though
976	that...that splitting off is also evident in your family.
977	PA: um hm!
978	R: yeah...Did you have any support for for your ideas...and where you fell on these issues?
979	PA: um..hmm..Ya know I had kinda female role models in high schoool.//
980	R: //uh huh//

981	PA:// people that I sort of attached myself to...As a matter of fact theres this one I thought of My older
982	sister has this friend who..she's really my friend now but they went through grammar school and high
983	school together..She was always like a feminist//and strong//
984	R:// um hm ..um hm//
985	PA:// And different ..And I always latched on to (name deleted) and actually we're really good friends
986	now//
987	R://um hm//
988	PA:// and um that kinda just took a life of it's own so//
989	R:// um hm.//
990	PA://I think I kinda just found support where//
991	R://umhm//
992	PA:// and when I needed it//
993	R:// um hm//...And you thought that you could.
994	PA: um hm
995	R: People were out there...but I want to ask you do you think it's important..that we put ourselves out
996	there in that way to kinda...role model?
997	PA:I ...I think so ..I try to ..I guess I sort of saw ya know my work as that//
998	R:// um hm//
999	PA:// I guess more so when I worked in adoption. Because ya know (voice trailing off) because ya know..
1000	your there for the kids...
1001	R: Why?
1002	PA: I guess.. Um just because you..I don't know maybe it was just more clearer ya know //
1003	R://um hm//
1004	PA:// the support you could be.. um (sniff) I don't know I do think it's important to put yourself out
1005	there.I've always tried to do that with my neices//
1006	R:// um hm//
1007	PA:// I was a coach for my nieces' basketball team//
1008	R://um hm....that's great!//
1009	PA: I did thatbut I think it is important.ya know.
1010	R: umhm.
1011	PA: I think it empowers people I think .. whether you realize it or not (sniff).
1012	R: um hm ..Where do you think..When you mentioned your niece..like girls of the next generation and
1013	women and whatever ...where do you think we're heading?
1014	PA: Well..again sometimes I think that things are going backward.
1015	R:Yeah?
1016	PA: Well not backwards I think things are getting covered up ya know?
1017	R: Yeah.
1018	PA: the whole abortion issue//
1019	R: //yeah//
1020	PA://ya know the whole ..they're going back to the whole children are better raised at home until 0-5 and
1021	ya know//
1022	R://yeah.//
1023	PA:// and that's all well and good but where is the money gonna come to support the family ya know?
1024	R: yeah.
1025	PA: So what's gonna give here? Ya know?
1026	R: yeah.
1027	PA:and is that gonna be the feminist's movement/s ah struggle ya know to have to say to society look ya
1028	want us to raise our children//
1029	R:// uh huh//
1030	PA:// then give us money!
1031	R: uh huh.
1032	PA: or ya know what's gonna happen here?//
1033	R:// uh huh//
1034	PA://health care ya know//
1035	R: //uh huh//

1036	PA:// all that stuff .
1037	R uh huh.
1038	PA: Ya know in a lotta ways I see things going backwards but in a lotta ways ya know there's like ya
1039	know like little kids little females playing soccer now//
1040	R://um hm//
1041	PA: //ya know..they're great! Ya know um hm..these are things ya know they couldn't imagine...When
1042	I first started playing basketball as a matter of fact they used to have girls rules....
1043	R: Really. (empathic tone)
1044	PA:Yes! and there were six people out on the court and actually I was just talking about that with a
1045	psychologist today because he always jokes at me about my basketball days and and..It changed during
1046	my playing time my days at grammar school I think it went from ya know girls rules to boys rules! But it
1047	was it was just the rules//
1048	R:// um hm.//
1049	PA://of the game now (laugh) it's now boys rules or girls rules//
1050	R:// um hm.//
1051	PA: Actually...God there was also actually pool at the CYO there was... girls pool was bumper pool//
1052	R:// uh huh..Which means what?
1053	PA:there was ah.. it was a different type of pool table a whole different set up..it had bumpers on it//
1054	R:// uh huh//
1055	PA://and I don't know if it was I don't know if it was just that they wanted to have the regular pool table
1056	to themselves..but so there was always things split like that..ya know//
1057	R:// uh huh..uh huh//
1058	PA://So I know I'm getting kinda off..off track. (laugh)
1059	R: No you're not not at all! Not at all..Not at all! (exaggerated)
1060	PA(sniff) I don't know ya know ..I don't know...I see my niece now my niece now has babies ya know//
1061	R:// uh huh//
1062	PA://um ya know and I see um the same thing ya know with um child care and ya know and she's
1063	working part time and the child's going to child care part time andI don't know... (exaggerated tone)
1064	she could probably make more money than her husband ya know?
1065	R: Really.
1066	PA: um Not a lot more!... but //
1067	R://but still//
1068	PA://still
1069	R://but the idea that she is she's automatically taken that role..it sounds like ..that she would go part time
1070	and he would stay..keep his job the same //
1071	PA:// right ...right.. and the other niece she has ya know stopped working and her husband is working
1072	overtime and part time ya know//
1073	R://um hm//
1074	PA://and all that stuff so ...ya know ...I think it's...I think its good that they've gotten family focused and
1075	society as a whole is trying to figure out ya know what to do with their children (sigh)
1076	R: um hm
1077	PA:but I think we need a whole global perspective on it//
1078	R:// uh huh..uh huh .. that's very good that's very interesting ..ok Let's see lets see what we need to wrap
1079	up here...in the next couple minutes.....um um hmm//
1080	PA: //I never realized how opinionated I was!//
1081	R:// So that's a good question! So how do you feel after we talk about this? We've talked a little bit
1082	about how you're kinda connected to history and your history and history in general?
1083	PA: It's incredible the things that that ya know have come up that haven't been in my awareness! (laugh)
1084	R: uh huh uh huh ..
1085	PA: cons..I mean it's been fun ya knowbut um//
1086	R:// So you feel good about it?
1087	PA: Yeah.
1088	R: It feels fun to you to talk about these things?
1089	PA: yeah..(sounds hesitant) yeah..
1090	R: Any other feelings about it?

1091	PA: Just that I feel old! (laugh)
1092	R: ya feel old?
1093	PA: yeah ..yeah..And I see some of the changes that have taken place..
1094	R:What changes do you think?
1095	PA: Well um..just that as I was explaining like the sports and just the way//
1096	R://yeah//
1097	PA:// and the.. the way like ya know that kids are viewed more these days probably ya know at least
1098	more in terms of at least sports and things like that.
1099	R: um hm
1100	PA: Yeah that they can do but um even so its still separate.
1101	R: yeah.
1102	PA: but ya know ..
1103	R: yeah..yeah.. so there's been some changes but it's still limited...yeah..Ok.. So I'm gonna ask you an
1104	obvious question! So do you consider yourself a feminist?
1105	PA: Yeah.. (laugh)
1106	R: yeah!.good!....I have a great quote...maybe I'll bring it for you next time...I meant to actually bring
1107	it..about the word feminism and how ya know ..ya know some people will argue..that that connects with
1108	women so again it kinda get's into this argument about oh it's women's issues or//
1109	PA:// that's it!
1110	R: Women's problems or whatever at the same time when you use that word it's also it's also our
1111	connection ya know this stuff all has a has a history//
1112	PA://um hm!
1113	R: and there's been a whole movement and there's been All (emphasized) these people these huge
1114	radical women //
1115	PA://um hm//
1116	R:// that have worked so hard and have gotten//
1117	PA:// right.//
1118	R://ya know to have some sense..ya know without all these factions as you've said..to have some sense of
1119	connction.
1120	PA: ya know honestly even when in America. Ya know...(deleted for confidentiality) um//
1121	R://(shake head) no//
1122	PA:// (deleted for confidentiality)//
1123	R:// Yeah..(deleted for confidentiality).
1124	PA://but like ya know like when slavery was ended ya know I mean there was a whole issue about I
1125	mean they were including men black men in the constitution //
1126	R://before women //
1127	PA://but not women//
1128	R:// yeah//
1129	PA:// So ya know it was still ...yeah and it caused more splits//
1130	R://Yeah! And there's also the arguments too with a lot of um the the civil rights movement..with the the
1131	black men ...being ...again. //
1132	PA://um hm//
1133	R:// same issue..//
1134	PA://um hm//
1135	R:// ya know their issues being first (exaggerated tone) and they were told..in some of the books I have
1136	read..ya know //
1137	PA://um hm//
1138	R://the women are told ya know your stuff comes later.
1139	PA: Yeah! And that's still being told I think a lot//
1140	R:// Yeah.
1141	PA:// In the black community ..
1142	R:// Yeah.. wow.. lots of factions.
1143	PA: um hm!
1144	R: Ummm!
1145	PA: the question is do we want to be more alike or more different! Ya know?

1146	R: Right.
1147	PA: And I mean in society as a whole everyone wants to keep splitting and splitting and splitting //
1148	R:// uh huh/
1149	PA://until it's just you and ya know your little nuclear family here//
1150	R:// right..that's true and I think you're right and I think what that points to is as we get more
1151	individualized you lose the sense of collectivity and action and change//
1152	PA: um hm..
1153	R: and which seems to be some of the things you're pointing to //
1154	PA://yep//
1155	R:// ya know you don't feel like you don't have some of the hope that maybe you did when you were in
1156	college //
1157	PA:// yep!
1158	R://where theres so many people active and centers and ya know all kinda stuff ya know and now it kinda
1159	feels like nothings happening//
1160	PA:// uh huh!//
1161	R:// nothings changing ...yeah..
1162	PA: Yeah..I see the stepford wives actually coming into fruition ya know.. some days yeah.. especially
1163	with some of the like the abortion and just seeing how ya know various factions are like ya know so
1164	opposed to gay rights//
1165	R:// um hm!//
1166	PA://and ya know ...domestic partnership..//
1167	R:// and that theres been no change in that!
1168	PA: Yeah! It's it's
1169	R: When you think about that Cause that's one of the things that I wanted to ask you and I didn't think
1170	that was fair to ask you ya know that there are some movements ya know that are working trying to get
1171	rights and ya know if that If that changed would that determine ya know where you decided to live ?
1172	PA: It won't now because I just have too many years in the state.
1173	R: yeah.
1174	PA: um But yeah I mean we've been I mean we're on (exaggerated) the lists and actually we also in Cape
1175	Cod they have ..you can register your partnership.
1176	R: uh huh.
1177	PA: and we're registered in town hall!
1178	R: uh huh
1179	PA: um yeah.. It means nothing to anybody//
1180	R://(disappointed tone) um//
1181	PA: //And doesn't really mean anything to us either but it was like ok ya know what ..this is//
1182	R:// But once again you take your own step..like you have all through your life//
1183	PA://yeah//
1184	R:// it sounds like taking that step and saying ok well //
1185	PA://yeah..If it ever happens See! Here it is! Ya know ya know //
1186	R: //right...right//
1187	PA:// that kinda thing
1188	R: Right!
1189	PA:// I 'd like to see it happen Ya know I mean personally I ..I used to joke with some of my ya knowmy
1190	gay male friends saying ya know we ought to get married so that and then make contracts amongst
1191	ourselves about who gets whose social security so ya know its all done fair but why should we just give it
1192	back to the system?
1193	R: Right! Right!
1194	PA: (sigh) Ya know! (laugh)
1195	R: It's true! That's good! You're right! Yeah!
1196	PA: I absolutely agree with that.
1197	R: You're right cause it's a whole system of validation it's not just emotional//
1198	PA:// right!//
1199	R://but it's how you take care of yourself//
1200	PA:// yeah..right..absolutely!//

1201	R: Ya know and they always say I mean single people live less I mean when spouses die//
1202	PA:// um hm//
1203	R:// when they do say that people that are married tend to live longer and women //
1204	PA://yep..yep//
1205	R://and so all those issues..I mean financially ..ya can't throw that part of that out either//
1206	PA:// yep uh huh And ya know I pay just as much into the system as the next person so//
1207	R:// yep!//
1208	PA://just because ya know (sigh) a penis next to me (laugh)//
1209	R://yeah..right//
1210	PA://ya know why can't can't my partner get the money//
1211	R :Yeah!
1212	PA: I've always had my political agendas(laugh).
1213	R:yeah yeah..Is there anything you want to add before we stop? Anything you're thinking about..Or
1214	anything you're wondering about in terms of this study? Or about me?
1215	PA: No...um..I don't know..I guess I am curious to know how all this information is gonna wind up into
1216	anything (laugh) but um I don't know its really I didn't know what to imagine//
1217	R:// uh huh//
1218	PA://Ya know I certainly didn't imagine ya know ..
1219	R: Imagine what?
1220	PA: Spewing.... (laugh)
1221	R: Do you really feel that?
1222	PA: Yeah! Yeah!..ya know I do really.
1223	R: Well I mean what I wanna say is that it's been great! And and all the information that you've given me
1224	and all your stories andya know just your way of speaking and being so open about things I think will be
1225	I think you'll see. I mean all the information is really useful.. I have a hard time really explaining like
1226	what I'll do with it but I mean you'll see everything that I do. The four readings that I'm doing I can't
1227	even remembr what each one is right now but it's about all these different voices and I think you really
1228	touched on all these voices.. of history ya know in the sense of the connection to the movement..to
1229	feminism what your thoughts are about that ya know that lable and the history and all that kind of stuff.
1230	Post structuralism is something I'm really into and trying to look at and trying to break away from all of
1231	these kind of labellings and trying to understand all these labellings and//
1232	PA:// um hm//
1233	R:// and divisions and what is happening ya know//
1234	PA:// uh hm//
1235	R://So that's like one level of my study and trying to look at that cause I do believe it's kinda this huge
1236	systematic thing ..it's not one person or one family or one cultural medium ya know//
1237	PA:// um hm//
1238	R:// its just this huge kinda power thing //
1239	PA://um hm//
1240	R://(very quick pace)It's hard to understand. And that's part of my interest in this study is that trying to
1241	connect it with life because ..ya know I can talk about we can read all of these books that are really hard
1242	and really abstract get I get really motivated when I read them at the same time then I think.. I walk away
1243	and I think ok what the hell does that mean//
1244	<i>(RR:As I type this long monologue given by me I am owndering why I let loose and said so much. Part</i>
1245	<i>of me has been assuming that it may just be that I was largely quiet aside from um hm's and that I felt</i>
1246	<i>the need to talk. While I think this is part of it . I also am starting to think that after listening to</i>
1247	<i>Participant A for an hour I am yearning to talk to her about my feminist ideologies also. I am feeling a</i>
1248	<i>desire to talk more and share more mutually with her. This may be part of the effects of talking with</i>
1249	<i>women about "women's issues .)</i>
1250	PA:// right..right..//
1251	R://How do I do that? How do I /..//
1252	PA://yeah on a basis an everyday basis...uh//
1253	R://Yeah do I just lecture ya know everybody I meet and say well this is how blah blah and this blah ya
1254	know?
1255	PA: Uh huh!

1256	R:... (quick pace) You know cause I'm also caught up in the system. I 've caught myself I don't know how
1257	many times talking to you using these different words ...guys//
1258	PA:// uh huh//
1259	R:// (quick pace) Using this as a general thing ya know//
1260	PA:// Uh huh//
1261	R:// And I become very aware of how much the system impacts even when I'm thinking about it.
1262	PA: Yeah.
1263	R: I mean the whole point of this interview (laugh) ya know?
1264	PA: uh huh (laugh)
1265	R: It's still so hard to break away!
1266	PA: Yeah..uh huh
1267	R: We'll see cause it won't come down to like ya know this dialogue won't come down to like answers//
1268	PA:// right..//
1269	R:// but it will come down to like these different levels that will try to like pull out//
1270	PA:// right// and then when you told me that there would only be like three people I thought oh no..I was
1271	hoping to like kinda blend in (laugh)
1272	R: (laugh) yeah?
1273	PA: Three people..that's pretty clear! (laugh)
1274	R: Well. Let me tell you this..what will happen is I will change any identifying informatin that could lead
1275	back to you//
1276	PA:// yeah um hm..no..I know..//
1277	R:// so no one will identify you.
1278	PA:// No..It's just kind of a vulnerable feeling ya know..that's all ..
1279	R:// yeah ..Yeah! So that's why I want to bring back the data to you so if there's anything you feel too
1280	vulnerable or too revealing ..cause there may be! May be a lot you feel that way about//
1281	PA:// uhuh//
1282	R:// then I'll change that. Ok?
1283	PA: Ok!
1284	R: Cause I feel strongly about that and I want your voice to be heard in a way that you want it to be heard
1285	in a way that you're comfortable.
1286	PA: Ya know there comes a point in your life...I always say I'm too old and too tired and ya know (sigh
1287	and laugh)
1288	R: Na..(laugh) ..For what?
1289	PA: To care what other people think. Ya know//
1290	R:// um hm
1291	PA: So that's kinda why I said (sigh)..
1292	R: Well good so we'll see...Any other questions?
1293	PA: No
1294	R: All right I'll stop it there..
1295	TAPE ENDS

Transcription from Interview 1, Participant Samantha -June 6/27/03 4:50-6:10pm.

Key: PS= Participant Samantha

R= Researcher Erin

RR = Researcher Reflections.

// = Interruptions and/or talking over each other.

Line #	Dialogue
1	R: let's put it on a chair..right in the middle..ok it's pretty good but I want to make sure I get
2	everything....ok..ok..ok..That is set up ummm..Ok! good. Let's see the other thing I want to tell you
3	before we get started is my feminist ideology as you saw the posting up this study is about gender and
4	gender ideology//
5	PS: um hm.//
6	R:// and gender issues and stuff like that ...And again like I just explained to you about I should have
7	taped it...um just explained to you about kinda doing the method and I want you to give your feedback
8	and kind of clarify what I'm saying about what it is that you're saying. ..and I'm doing that because it is a
9	feminist...my stance on feminism and my desire to do a feminist study cause I don't want to do as I said
10	before kinda this traditional hierarchy power kind of thing//
11	(RR: I hope I was clearer about this before I started taping. I think I may be rushing through a little bit
12	because I am anxious to get started. I don't think I am being clear here)
13	PS: //right//
14	R:// Instead I want to kinda get underneath that and say we're both important//
15	PS:/ uh huh//
16	R:// and this stuff needs to be seen. So..I do see myself as a feminist and the other thing with that is that
17	that is going to influence how I see...ya know the things that we say so I want to be real up front about
18	that. Just as I'm asking you to disclose all kinds of stuff I want to ya know disclose that about myself//
19	PS: //Yeah.//
20	R:So Ok that's that. I want to ask you a couple of identifying information questions //
21	PS: //Sure!//
22	R:// to get some background and things like that cause I think those things will also be important in terms
23	of what we see...um let's see what should I ask you... Ok. How old are you?
24	PS: 27
25	R: ok.. and What do you identify as your race or ethnicity?
26	PS: African American
27	R: And..um what about ..do you have any kind of religious affiliation or..//
28	PS:// Roman Catholic.
29	R: ok....ok.....what about what about your degree and job?
30	PS: ok..MSW and psychiatric social worker.
31	R: uh huh ok....good....ummm..ok when did you take your gender focused course?
32	PS: umm spring of '98 (bottle drops)
33	R: Do you remember what it was called..anything about it?
34	PS: ya know I was wracking my brain trying to remember what the name of the course was..
35	R: um hm..It doesn't have to be exact...I'm I'm I'm just curious... really.
36	Pause
37	PS: um.....It wasn't...um Women and ..women and...it was something like women and psychological
38	issues something like that.
39	R: Ok.
40	PS: It was in the psychology department.
41	R: Ok ..ok..that's great to know ..ok
42	PS: I know that ..and it was run by a graduate student working on her.. dissertation .
43	R: uh huh ...Ok..(inaudible) and what kind of stuff did you cover in there..just in general.
44	PS: Ya know I should have looked it up this weekend something told me to look through my stuff..I
45	saved a lot of stuff from college....um (smirk)//
46	R: //No..I'm glad that you didn't it's more about what stayed with you//

47	PS: //oh..ok we did we did a lot of issues //
48	R: //oh ok..um hm//
49	PS://We did a lot of issues..um talked about age....and fertility issues..umm..we did do women in the
50	media//
51	R:// uh huh//
52	PS: we did a section on that...um in the workforce//
53	R://um hm//
54	PS:// kinda broad...we didn't stay focused on one thing.. we tried to look at as many areas as we.. as we
55	could.
56	R: um hm//
57	PS:// in the short time in the semester//
58	R://um hm..um hm.. And what kinda drew you to that course?
59	PS: becau...well one because it was small//
60	R:// uh huh//
61	PS:// um all women maybe I think there was one guy with us...um maybe 18 people and um . I hadn't
62	taken a gender course before so I figured it would be interesting.
63	R: um hm
64	PS: Just something (emphasized) new to learn
65	R:um hm.
66	PS: Something I had never focused on because most of the time I would go towards..um classes to do
67	with race and religion but I never looked at gender.//
68	R:// interesting..that's interesting//
69	(RR: Here I am thinking about the fact that gender was not identified as an issue. I think that's interesting
70	especially because race and religiosity is..I am wondering about the differences..why this may be so).
71	PS:// Yeah...it...It was a nice class..we had a very good relationship with everyone in the class..and
72	actually we did activities outside of the class. She would have..We'd have movie night.
73	R: uh huh
74	PS: And we'd show movies pertaining to things we were talking about that week in class. And then
75	discuss it on Monday..//
76	R://um hm//
77	PS:// in class the issues that were brought up.
78	R:So..you would actually meet outside of class to do things.
79	PS: In her apartment.
80	R: wow!
81	PS: and we'd bring snacks and yeah..so that was fun.
82	R: So it sounds like you had pretty positive associations. What was that like for you? What was kinda the
83	biggest thing that stood out for you about that class?
84	PS: the enthusiasm of the instructor. She actually wrote my .. one of my reference letters for graduate
85	school//
86	R:// umm//
87	PS://She was really interested in feminism the way women are perceived um ..And you could tell when
88	she was teaching that she was really excited about it. And also she listened to everyone's point of
89	view!.Everyone in the class//
90	R://uh huh//
91	PS://.cause it was a pretty diverse class um in terms of I mean we were all the same age. There weren't
92	any um older college students in the class but there were a lot of different races//
93	R:// um hm//
94	PS://So ..and backgrounds//
95	R://um hm//
96	PS: So that was nice. She listened to everyone and it was it wasn't too much lecture? //
97	R://um hm//
98	PS://It was more discussion.//
99	R://uh huh//
100	PS:// And debate about different issues....which I liked instead of the drone on I'm fallin asleep //
101	R://um hm//

102	PS://lecture
103	R:um hm
104	PS:yeah that was my junior year. ..It was nice...
105	R: It was..was there...What about any any negative things?
106	(I feel that it's important that I ask this because I get the sense that PS may feel pressure to say only
107	positive things about the course.)
108	PS: ummm..No! (sounds surprised) actually..nothing sticks out ! //
109	R://uh huh//
110	PS://No negative to me in that class at all . (smirk)(laugh)pause
111	R: It's ok you can take a minute to think about it (laugh)
112	PS: Nope!
113	R: umm... Do you think it changed you at all?
114	(short pause)
115	PS: Actually. (aounds surprised) ya know what.//
116	R://uh huh (encouraging tone)
117	PS: it really did! Ahh.....It made me .look at..ok...it . //
118	R:// It's ok you can take your time
119	PS: in one area...particularly women and the media//
120	R:// uh huh//
121	PS://..I kinda always looked at TV and never really thought anything about the way that women are
122	perceived and things like that..um//
123	R:// Really?
124	PS: And um//
125	R:// Can I stop you for a minute?
126	PS:Sure!
127	R://Did you ever..like you said before that you had taken classes on religion and race and things like that.
128	PS: uh huh.
129	R: now what was your thought about that when you would watch TV?
130	PS: Oh! (exaggerated and smirking)
131	R: Would you be more aware of things...Ok!...
132	PS:yeah Ok! (in a comic tone) Well where are all the Black people and where are all the Asians why are
133	there no commercials with Asians and Hispanics? And um in terms of what you see in mainstream culture
134	it seemed like there was always Caucasian Americans and..preferably male that you saw in this particular
135	light//
136	R:// um hm//
137	PS://And um just the way and people interact themselves kinda people separate into groups.without even
138	any um prompting and there was that and I noticed it initially ..when I went to college cause there was
139	as soon as you went into the cafeteria it was like any different group went into their .. ya know?//
140	R:// interesting//
141	PS//So I looked I wanted to find out different theories and studies that had been done about why does
142	that happen and things like that//
143	R:/ uh huh//
144	PS://In religion I went to a Catholic school pretty much all throughout.. second grade to graduating from
145	high school...So about ten years at Catholic school . We were exposed to other religions but we never
146	really learned too much about them but we were exposed to them. I was interested in learning about other
147	religions//
148	R:// um hm//
149	PS:// So I took a lot of religion courses too...just for my own personal knowledge ..just to make
150	sure..Hey am I doin the right religion thing?
151	R:// uh huh//
152	PS: ya know..just explorin//
153	R:// uh huh..uh huh//
154	PS:But I didn't didn't look at gender or anything kind of like ahh!(voice raises)...ahh growing up I didn't
155	have much of a male male influence cause my mom was always there and I'm a woman just like her and I
156	never really thought that much about//

157	R:// umm! (voice raises)//
158	PS:// about gender issues and how they relate because there wasn't anybody else there but a female.
159	R:um hm So was it just you and your mom?
160	PS: It was me my mom and my brother. But my brother's younger than me//
161	R:// um hm//
162	PS://and ..and there was nev.. never any kind of gender issues were brought up and I just never thought
163	about it until I got to college and I saw how people reacted men and women and I was just like oh! Oh?
164	And a lot of things I just didn't understand//
165	R:// interesting//
166	PS:// because I wasn't socialized that way...and I would go over to my friend's house and see how their
167	parents interacted..and I was like oh//
168	R:// You're making that face ..what were you thinkin?
169	PS:It was different. //
170	R:// umhm//
171	PS: some households I noticed that some women kinda took aI don't want to say a subservient role
172	but more of a ...like it seemed like the father was the head of the household and..//
173	R:// umhm//
174	PS://in charge and the woman was just like ok whatever you say honey kind of role//
175	R:// uh huh//
176	PS://with my friends is what I observed//
177	R:// um hm//
178	PS://cause most of my friends when I was growing up in grade school and high school were from single
179	parent homes too.
180	R: umhm/
181	PS:which was mother's..So I never really had..um//
182	R: // So a lot of your friends were from single parent homes//
183	PS:// umhm//
184	R://with just the mother there.
185	PS: um hm..right.. And my mom is totally different (RR: Totally different than who..I may be projecting
186	here but I am wondering what PS means by this and I don't end up asking which suggests that I am
187	assuming she means a negative connotation of women and I do not want to highlight this because of
188	my own disagreement with this statement.) I mean she's very strong and I mean she had to take on
189	pretty much. both the man and the woman roles cause that's what she just had to do and so I just always
190	looked at//
191	R:// umhm//
192	PS://so I always looked at women being that way.//
193	R:// uh huh//
194	PS:// and when I got to high school..I mean college it was totally different.cause even when I.. we talked
195	about what we'd like to do ya know in life...ya know in freshman year your just talking with your
196	friends//
197	R:// uh huh//
198	PS:// my one friend said (said in high sarcastic voice) oh ya know I just want to go and get married and
199	have kids. And I'm like What! Ya know I never thought that that could be a goal!
200	R: uh huh//
201	PS://for a woman!//
202	R://Interesting!//
203	PS://because...I look at my mom and I'm like ..Well yes, she got married and she had children but she has
204	goals in her life. Like..She wants a career...a satisfying career and she wants to do this and that and this//
205	R:// uh huh//
206	PS:// and this chick is just sittin on her butt..knowing she is only going to college so she can get a good
207	husband ..Like that makes entirely no sense to me!
208	R: uh huh.
209	PS:um and I still struggle with that now.
210	R: So tell me about that ,
211	PS: I'm like..I guess because ok. I look at it as like not that their weak I don't want to say that ..I don't

212	really agree with women who become dependent like totally dependent on their mate.
213	R: uh huh
214	PS: Because..what happens if that mate isn't there?/
215	R:// uh huh//
216	PS:// And that's how I always looked at it that way because.. when my dad died I was like 7//
217	R:// uh huh//
218	PS:// and If my mom didn't have any kind..kind of job training.or didn't have the initiative to go out
219	and..See what happened was right after my dad died she went right back to college ..so that she could get
220	a better job so she could get more money //
221	R://uh huh//
222	PS://to support us and put us through college and things like that ..but she...
223	R:// Had she been working before your dad died?//
224	PS:// Yeah she was working at a childcare center but she knew that if she wanted more money that she
225	needed a degree and she actually always wanted to be a teacher . So when my father died she said ok well
226	this is what I have to do and this is what I wanted to do so I kind of always looked at it like well this is
227	what you should! Do.//
228	R:// uh huh//
229	PS://ya know what I mean?
230	R: uh huh ...uh huh.
231	PS: ummmmsso when people totally depend on their husband and they haven't worked for years they don't
232	plan on ever working..ya know//
233	R:// uh huh//
234	PS:// What happens if god forbid.. your husband gets in an accident (voice trails off) and he's dead. What
235	are you going to do? ya know?
236	R: uh huh.
237	PS:What are you going to do? Ya know I always look at it...I'm sure I look at it that way because of my
238	experience.
239	R:// um hm.
240	PS:// but that's sort of my attitude like for the whole thing like in terms of making at life for
241	yourself..and..ya know but and...(change in tone) I believe in marriage and all that stuff and family and
242	everything ..But I also think that ..that you should have your own .you should have your own plan//
243	R:// uh huh.//
244	PS://just in case something happens.
245	R:// When you say that you say just in case it also sounds like theres more reasons for that. What do you
246	think those reasons are?
247	(RR: When I say this line I think this was more of a prompt to get her to think about more reasons to
248	for women to have their own plan aside from emergencies. I'm not sure that PS would have given other
249	reasons without prompting.)
250	PS:JustUmm even even if you just want (laugh) like if you want to get a divorce or something else.
251	Or start something else! Ya know?
252	R:// um hm//
253	PS: you should have you should have options you shouldn't just limit yourself to one thing!//
254	R:// um hm//
255	PS:// but um I don't know apparently I'm well I'm having a little issue with that now. My boyfriend
256	..well his mother was like stay at home mom and raised ya know//
257	R:// um hm//
258	PS:// him and his sister and never worked and still doesn't work. And doesn't plan on ever working and
259	he's 35. ...I'm like what?
260	R: um hm
261	PS: Ya know and she's 60 something and that's like foreign to me that's a foreign concept.
262	R: How.. does...Does she say things to you or do you think that influences your relationship with/
263	PS:// Nooo.He says things It's more (voice lowered and sarcastic)oh when we get married and have
264	kids..I want you to stay home for//
265	R:// He says this to you?// (RR: As in previous comment I think I wanted to make sure that my outrage
266	at such a comment is heard..more for me than participant..or is this my strategy to empower or validate

267	<i>her own concerns about this. Notice that participant ignores this comment and continues without a</i>
268	<i>pause or shift in how she is wording things.)</i>
269	<i>PS://I want you to stay home for three years and raise it cause I don't want to put the kids in</i>
270	<i>daycare...And I'm like ..Excuse me! Ya know kinda thing?</i>
271	R: Yeah!
272	PS: And I'm like Wha!!! I didn't go for my master's degree to stay home and sit on my butt! Ya know?
273	R: um hm.
274	PS://And not that I probably wouldn't take off that's not it..It's just more of him telling me well this is
275	what I want Well excuse me. We need to be we need to talk about it and come to an agreement.
276	R: uh huh.
277	PS: Not just this is what I want because that's what you grew up with that doesn't necessarily mean that
278	it's the right way..and I'm not necessarily sure what the right way is..but..
279	R: But you want to (emphasized)talk about it.before..ah..
280	PS: Right!
281	R: Before it's determined.. it's predetermined Oh this is what women do. This is what men do kinda thing.
282	PS: Right and I and he seems to have he kinda has this preconceived notion of what women.. these roles
283	that women are supposed to fit in..its just that women are supposed to have kids and be moms and be
284	wives and stay at home and be happy doin that. Which that 's great and I wouldn't mind doing that //
285	R:// uh huh//
286	PS://But I also want to have other things. I also want to have a career and do things for myself like my
287	own goals which I don't know ..that;s ..so ..yeah..
288	R: It seems like you're really struggling with that right now. (<i>I'm not sure this comment is relevant to</i>
289	<i>study or more of a psychological intervention. It may have been too much.</i>)
290	PS: Oh yeah and he know's ..he..It's been an issue..an issue for a hot second because its's especially come
291	up after I got hurt (the incident PS is referring to is the incident that prevented us from meeting for our
292	first interview when she was attacked by a patient) //
293	R:// um hm//
294	PS:// because I didn't want to come back to work. I was kind of toying with it like gosh....ya know I bust
295	my butt at this job ..For what?
296	R: uh huh.
297	PS: To get hurt? Ya know so he says well quit and ya know I'll take care of you . I said what..I have bills
298	to pay I need medical insurance what am I gonna do? Well quit your job and I'll pay your bills until you
299	get another one..another job. I said ya know what that's great and if I was your wife and I would!..
300	R: Would you? (emphasized, sounds surprised)
301	PS: Just for a little bit . I mean not for a while if it as like two months I'd be like freak this and go and get
302	something little but I'm like I'm not your wife and what happens if god forbid we break up which I know
303	we're no going to but..What happens like...I don't I..I'm left with nothing! You just leave me hanging
304	there ya know.
305	R: um hm
306	PS: there what am I going to do? Ya know.. I said I can't do that. I can not do that. I'm like I have to do
307	this on my own. I have to figure out something.
308	R: um hm
309	PS: Which was me putting out my resumes going on a couple interviews whatever whatever..at least
310	going out there at least making a considerate effort to go out and find another job. But I still knew ya
311	know that I had to come back here.
312	R: um hm
313	PS: to maintain money and continue to pay off debts and things like that so it was the kind of choice I had
314	to make...and He just kind of sees me a little...like.... (change in voice tone-lower)Well you should let
315	other people You should just let depend on other people dadida da da ...(change back to regular
316	voice)Yeah I realize that but not to the extent that you're telling me to do it. I kinda have an issue with it.
317	R: Yeah how do you think that was influenced like his you getting hurt at work versus let's say he got hurt
318	at his job? How do you think that would be different?
319	PS: (laugh) IF he got hurt at his job there would never be a question . I don't think he'd question. Of
320	his....He might question going back to his job.
321	R: uh huh.

322	PS: He'd probably just aks for another assignment from his company cause..he's a consultant so he can
323	he'd probably say ok I'm not going back to that particular assignment I'm going elsewhere and you need
324	to find something for me cause I am not going back there.
325	R:um hm
326	PS: but it would not have been he just wouldn't consider not working that's just not something he would
327	consider.//
328	R://um hm//
329	PS:// Cause he looks at it as well I make more money than you and I have to maintain my house well this
330	that and then this//
331	R:// um hm.//
332	PS:// So I can't afford to do that and another thing I think.. is that he looks at it as Ok so he does make
333	more money than me..Substantially (laugh)//
334	R://(laugh)//
335	PS:// more money than me! And then he has a house and I live at home with my mom and so he's like ok
336	well ya know I have a house and I have this and I have that and all the stuff that you don't have so I can't
337	afford not to work. But I look at it as like I know//
338	R://uh huh//
339	PS://you might think that my stuff is trivial but I have student loans .
340	R:// uh huh//
341	PS://I have credit card debt that I want to get paid off before I'm 30. I want to pay off my car.
342	R: um hm.
343	PS: Things that I think are important.
344	R: um hm
345	PS: are things that he doesn't feel are important. Not that their not important just not as important.as a
346	house or other things. Y a know what I mean?
347	R: uh huh.
348	PS: So I think he looks at my job or as expendable.
349	R: Wow!
350	PS: As compared to his job that's how that's how I see it.
351	R: uh huh.
352	PS: Well you can..you can afford to but I can't.
353	R: So how do you feel about that?
354	PS: I don't think it's right at all! Now granted I did choose a profession that I was gonna make ..I mean I
355	did get my master's in small wages..but//
356	R://(laugh).//
357	PS:ya know I still.. I still want to work .
358	R: uh huh.
359	PS: I don't want to sit at home..I want to do something and I feel that I am making a difference albeit very
360	small....um here ..and it is important...
361	R: uh huh.
362	PS: And I don't know sometimes I guess in terms of gender roles ... I think with him ..he's very
363	traditional and where's ..um I 'm not.
364	R: uh huh..So given that sort of difference what do you ..think that's about.. or what do you think you like
365	about that maybe?
366	PS: ummmm....I guess I like that he's chivalrous..
367	R: uh huh.
368	PS: and he does treat me ya know.. like a lady kinda likeya know.
369	R: So what does that mean...say something about that.
370	PS: like um ohh.. like opening the door for me..pulling out my chair ..and things like that..ya know...just
371	to make me feel special.
372	R: uh huh.
373	PS: and I do like it that he is thinking about ohh..I would take care of you if you asked me to ...
374	SOUND OF OVERHEAD INTERCOM SYSTEM FOR HOSPITAL . (PS does not pause)
375	R: um hm.
376	PS: But I guess for me ..I would like to know that I have options..not that you're telling me to do this..

377	R: right.
378	PS: I want options .and then we discuss what's best for both of us....not this is what you have to do and
379	you better do it.
380	R: uh huh.
381	PS: Like I'm al little..I'm not a the type of person that responds well to that.
382	R: So if he said it that way..you wouldn't..
383	PS: Oh yes... heck no.and I think he knows that about me now. That that's not the way to go.
384	R: um hm
385	PS: We pretty much have to discuss everything and ya know we..we ..don't really argue about gender
386	roles or anything ...but I know there's a difference.
387	R: um hm..
388	PS: and I know that he thinks there's a difference too..we don't really don't really discuss it that much //
389	R://um hm//
390	PS:// It's only when certain things come up.//
391	R:// um hm.//
392	PS:// that we'll
393	R: Like this this study is about gender so it makes sense that that's coming up.// (RR: here I think both
394	of us are uncomfortable with staying focused on PS's romantic relationship. PS shifts topic. I am
395	relieved and like she is rescuing me by changing topic back to the issue at hand.)
396	PS://yeah.//
397	R:// yeah..so..
398	PAUSE
399	PS: Like particularly form the class what I looked at like I looked at before like Snoop Dog..like his first
400	CD ..I don't know if you ever listened to it or whatever//
401	R:// uh huh (RR: It's interesting that I said uh huh here because I have not listened to this CD, It
402	seems I am trying to encourage PS by saying to her that I am on the same page. Her hesitance also
403	suggests that she is not sure if I will understand her reference to hip hop music. Suggests a
404	confrontation with racial difference that we are both not comfortable with enough to directly
405	approach.)
406	PS: but there's this pretty bad song on it..I don't know the title but basically...its (in a rhythmic tone)
407	It ain't no fun unless the homies can have none (RR I think PS uses the wrong word here-change none
408	to some)..Ok and the whole song is basically about Snoop Dog and his friends saying that ok if I'm
409	sleeping with one woman then she's going to be passed around to all my friends and if not kinda then
410	we're not gonna get with her cause she's not a good time.
411	R: uh huh.
412	PS: kinda that's the whole gist of the song...
413	R: uh huh uh huh..
414	PS: So when was the Snoop dog CD released ok I was a senior in high school about to go t o college so
415	that was like '94.. Well the song has a really good beat...
416	R: uh huh.
417	PS: And ya know..and like .. I know all the words to the song and I'm like singin to it and dancin to it and
418	everything like that//
419	R:// uh huh//
420	PS://and I never really thought about the words. I knew the words ..but I never really thought about the
421	words until like I went to the class.
422	R: huh.
423	PS: kind of like my god that's really degrading and I can't believe that's really the words to that song
424	...And..In actuality I notice it more now //
425	R:// uh huh//
426	PS://However I still listen to it on the radio. I won't buy the CD's..But I still listen to it on the radio.
427	R: So it sounds like you do draw a line though you won't you ..Are you hard about that line ..like I will
428	not buy the CD but you will listen to it //
429	PS: Yeah! Like I'm not gonna buy a CD when it's really horrible but like if it's on in a club and I wanna
430	dance like I'll still dance to it ..like if it's on the radio I'll probably listen to it.
431	R: uh huh.

432	PS: but I'm not gonna buy a CD..But I've noticed it particularly since the class... I notice that
433	particularly in hip hop. Cause that is what I like mainly hip hop and rap...not so much R&B..I like R&B
434	but R&B doesn't do this as much. But Hip Hop and Rap especially pretty much treat women in a
435	degrading//
436	R:// um hm//
437	PS://degrading towards women we're all bitches we're all ho's. We all do this that and the other and
438	(inaudible)...//
439	R:// uh huh//
440	PS:// and I never noticed it until the class.
441	R: um hm..What do you think that's about? What are your ideas about that ?...that hip hop and rap...//
442	PS:// What are my ideas? // (RR : PS seems surprised that I want her ideas here. I worry that I have
443	not encouraged her to speak with her own voice enough.)
444	R:// uh huh..yeah//
445	PS://ya know I've sat there and I've tried to figure it out like back when hip hop and rap like back when
446	they first started like back in the '70's and '80's late 70's early '80's it wasn't like that. It was more ya
447	know like I have better rhyming skills than you During the late..early 90's especially it was really
448	positive//
449	R:// um hm//
450	PS://talking about well we need to do this to be a better person ..and it was more for like upliftment of
451	like your culture//
452	R:// um hm..//
453	PS://and things like that and then in the mid '90's like gangster rap out of like California//(speaking
454	softly) I listen to some of the words..//
455	R://um hm...Please speak up a little I'm just a little ..//
456	PS:// oh sure!.I listen to some of the words and I try to really think ok where does this come from like why
457	do they think//
458	R:// umhm//
459	PS:// and then sometimes I think ok. Maybe they don't they don't respect themselves and Is that why
460	they don't respect women or they have bad relationships with their moms or...I have no idea (sounds
461	exasperated)
462	R: uh huh.
463	PS: I don't know where it comes from.
464	R: uh huh.
465	PS:and I it just like so many people pick it up..it's not like one particular artist..ya know..
466	R: yep.
467	PS:Cause I could see if it was but it's not and then um the women rappers are kinda like not.all but some
468	like um Foxy Brown and lil'Kim they come out and like the stuff on their album is like they're the
469	biggest whores in the world. //
470	R://uh huh//
471	PS:// It's like a pornographic CD.....Why? is this are we only.. Actually I have thought about this.. And
472	this is what I've come up with one time//
473	R:// It sounds like it! It sounds like you really kind of use a lot of your training to think this through.//
474	PS://I was talking about this with my boyfriend actually and we kinda look at it like..when you think back
475	in slavery times//R:// um hm..//
476	PS:// back in slavery times and there were certain perceptions that um they had towards black men and
477	black women. Black men were looked at like these (voice exaggerated) sexually hungry beasts that would
478	rape a white woman //
479	R://um hm
480	PS:and how they saw them as really masculine and fierce ya know//
481	R://um hm//
482	PS:// and you gotta keep them in control..they're animals kinda thing//
483	R:// um hm//
484	PS://and then the black women were kinda looked at as real sexual too but in terms of you can just take
485	advantage of them..you can do whatever (drawn out) you..want and doesn't matter about feelings or
486	anything like that you can just do whatever.

487	R: um hm.
488	PS: So it's like we kinda looked at it like that attitude is just perpetuated generations generations down the
489	road it's not like the white people are thinking that about us its like our own people are thinkin that
490	about us.
491	R: um hm.
492	PS: it's the men in particular (quiet voice) like rappers like think that about us. as property.
493	R: um hm.
494	PS: As ya know as however many hos..and bitches I have the better man I am..ya know what I mean .
495	R: um hm
496	PS: It's more like we're possessions that ...um..they can hang up on the wall and take down and do
497	whatever they want to and feel better about rhemselves?
498	R: um hm.
499	PS: And if they .like. It seemed like that could (inaudible) ya know how many slaves I had and the better
500	behaved they were and did whatever I want then the better master I was then (bell from hospital intercom
501	system sounds again) the more or whatever I had..//
502	R: // interesting//
503	PS: // ya know that kinda stuff...so...//
504	R: // that's very interesting ..let me ask you this..Kinda the hierarchy in almost sounds like ya know the
505	slave master ..the more slaves you have underneathe..lower than..//
506	PS: // uh huh..//
507	R: // makes you feel better//
508	PS: // right//
509	R: // bigger //
510	PS: // right!//
511	R: // whatever so it's kinda like the black men also It's like who's below them?
512	PS: // Right!
513	R: women..well Black women particularly..//
514	PS: // exactly!
515	R: so...//
516	PS: The more women I have..than the better I feel but it's not like I care about any of these women..//
517	R: // um hm..//
518	PS: // it's just that I use them for whatever I want. And another things ..this is a big problem..I don't
519	know particularly where this comes from...I have no idea (in a sarcastic tone)..but I'd actually like people
520	to do a study on it..but//
521	R: // (laugh)..//
522	PS: // but the way that particularly my culture in general kinda looks at//
523	R: // What do you mean when you say your culture in general?
524	PS: African American culture looks at illegitimate children phenomenon//
525	R: // What do you mean by that? Explain that.
526	PS: in terms of it's ok ..like the usage of the term babymama..like that's a good thing (voice very low and
527	quiet)..//
528	R: // Can you speak up a little?
529	PS: // it's like a good thing and it's ok for a guy to have like three babymama's ..and he doesn't take care of
530	..of any of the kids but...//
531	R: // um hm..//
532	PS: // ya know whatever...I'm gonna do whatever I want anyway and (tone is sarcastic) it's like nobody
533	really says anything to these people and nobody like says hey what you're doing is wrong and it's not like
534	that big of a deal.
535	R: uh huh.
536	PS: And I 'don't understand like where that comes from that annoys me to no end and actually //
537	R: // uh huh..//
538	PS: // I was kind of reluctant to continue dating my current boyfriend because he in fact does have a
539	baby's mama //
540	R: // um hm..//
541	PS: // um//

542	R:// does he ..will he use that term?
543	(RR: Here I think I was too careful in asking if the boyfriend used the term. Instead, I should have called
544	attention to the fact that PS used the term that she previously indicated was problematic.)
545	PS: jokingly I mean not ..not um..//
546	R:// seriously.
547	PS:// no. yeah not seriously as a joke. Apparently ..apparently he was my age actually and he was in a
548	relationship with her . ya know... they had relations and the child and so forth...they never got married.//
549	R:// uh huh.//
550	PS://So I was kinda like (sighs)...ya know!..//
551	R:// what?..what are you thinking about?
552	PS:I was a little upset and disappointed I as like gosh ya know..you should have been a little more
553	prepared..y know if you're gonna have sex with someone you know the consequences ..//
554	R:// uh huh.//
555	PS://You could have taken precautions or maybe not have had sex with her.or something like that I kinda
556	look at it like that's a real problem...And I know so many people in that situation and I guess it's more
557	for me ..it kinda hits home a little more cause I didn't have a father and cause he died. ...Not because he
558	didn't want to be there! Or he didn't get along with my mom//
559	R:// uh huh//
560	PS://and here You are and you have this child..and yeah you have a relationship with her but you're not
561	there all the time //
562	R:// um hm//
563	PS:// And just because you knocked this chick up because you didn't mean to....ya know what I mean?
564	R:uh huh.
565	PS: I see that so much and it infuriates me so much..
566	R: what do you think that means about women's place?
567	PS:Ah!...ya know it's like we're supposed to do everything!..like Women in that place are supposed to do
568	everything! And the men are not responsible.. Granted my boyfriend does..He does take his child for
569	every every .vacation there is from school.. she's at his home..he does pay child support..and um for the
570	whole summer she lives with him...//
571	R:// um hm.//
572	PS:// But there's a lot of men that don't even do half of that ...a lot! I don't understand!..//
573	R:// uh huh//
574	PS:// I don't know what they are thinking. They just think it's their right to go around and spread their
575	seed allover//
576	R:// uh huh//
577	PS://and it's ok...and the women are just stuck and they have to make do..and rely on other women to
578	help them out TAPE ENDS
579	PS:And I know that that's really hard. Ya know and goodness knows how they're gonna see women
580	when they grow up..like I have know idea ya know //
581	R:// ummm//
582	PS://I don't know how my brother conceives women considering he just grew up with one.
583	R: um hm.
584	PS:I think think it would have been nice for him for him to have a male role model growing up without
585	one//
586	R:// uh huh.
587	PS: And I know my mom feels bad for that and that she tries to overcompensate by giving him things and
588	kinda coddling him or whatever because just in terms of our living condition . I only moved back because
589	of the need I had to..because someone got murdered in front of my apartment //
590	R://wow!
591	PS: but he's never left. He even went to school . He applied to culinary arts school but..he only applied
592	to (specific area deleted) so that he could commute and stay at home he's never been out of the house! //
593	R:umhm//
594	PS: And she has no problem with that .
595	R: um hm.
596	PS:And to me it's like ya know. I feel bad I think, gosh we have this situation s and it's like women have

597	to do so much. They have to do everything and then they don't even know if they're doing it right or
598	what.
599	R: So you feel..It sounds like you feel that women are or feel like or maybe feel like a weight of
600	responsibility//
601	PS:// um hm.//
602	R://from society.... society .. and women ourselves..We kind of internally //
603	PS:// right.//
604	R:// expect more from ourselves than men.//
605	PS:// Exactly!...exactly.
606	R: um hm
607	PS: and I see particularly with the babymama situation . It seems like it just.//
608	R:// um hm.//
609	PS:// perpetuates that idea well you don't really have to have that much responsibility cause the mother
610	will take care of the child like they always do anyway. So.. you..you just go ahead and do whatever you
611	want!
612	R:um hm.
613	PS: umm and to me that's just that's just not right!
614	R: um hm. How do you think things have changed through time..or I don't know one way or the other
615	..um?
616	PS:Ohh..ahh..Oh well at least in terms of legal system you can go to court and get people to pay child
617	support.//
618	R:// uh huh
619	PS: at least that's a way to take some accountability and I know that's changed//
620	R:// uh huh.//
621	PS:// and that they are trying to enforce that a lot more. Umm..but ya know..even like mediawise it seems
622	like they try to... say like it's ok. Cause I just remember there was this song out...what year was it like
623	ninety....no 2000? It was either '99 or 2000 .//
624	R: um hm.//
625	PS:// ...anyway..But there was this song it was from down south ..obviously you could tell cause of their
626	accents but it was like..(harmonizing) <i>Who dat is? ..Oh that's just my babydaddy.....</i> Like oh ..Who cares
627	about him ya know//
628	R:// um hm//
629	PS:// I'm tryin to talk to you. And he doesn't really matter ..Ya know they're just screaming it like //
630	R:// um hm ..um hm..
631	PS:// like it's ok //
632	R:// um hm.
633	PS:y know..I think that it's been brought out in the media a lot more but I think it hasn't been looked at as
634	oh. It's a bad thing it's like oh it's ok..ya know?
635	R: uh huh.
636	PS:ya know?//
637	R://Yeah!//
638	PS://I think that's the least changed.
639	R: Yeah...so in a negative way.
640	PS:yeah. ..um hm..
641	R: It sounds like..sounds like maybe you feel there's a whole movement really?//
642	PS:// um hm//
643	R:// Like you've kinda noticed since high school kind of these changes that have happened where all this
644	is ok //
645	PS: um hm..(sarcastic tone) that's fine.
646	R: All of this is ok.Where as maybe before ..it didn't feel that way to you?
647	PS: Right!....like I didn't...ya know... like it wasn't ..it wasn't maybe..I remember like with family
648	members and stuff like they would kind of be forced to take responsibility and do this and do you need to
649	be apart do you need to do this or that but now it seems so prevalent that it's like nooo. //
650	R://umm//
651	PS://oh well whatever..Ya know?

652	R:umhm.
653	PS: (whispered inaudible tone — saying something about it driving her crazy.)
654	R: yeah..It sounds like it's a big issue.//
655	PS:// Yeah! Oh..big time! With me cause I just don't don't agree ! and then oh..my boyfriend and I get
656	into discussions about it sometimes and he's like you act like you're Virgin Mary or whatever . I'm not
657	saying I am ..I was like...But I kinda looked at it as like well if I was gonna do that with somebody I
658	would think like do I want to have kids with this person //
659	R:// uh huh.//
660	PS:// and if I do can I count on them to do whatever..Or...Or! am I making the choice not to even include
661	them or want them to be a part. You know what I mean?
662	R: uh huh.
663	PS:I was like I actually thought about that stuff cause it could happen ?
664	R: um hm um hm.
665	PS: cause I know a lot of people who don't think about it but I don't know...and um you get the women
666	who just don't care either..//
667	R:um hm.
668	PS:and then the kids are just left to the street to raise (sarcastic laugh)....but I don't know ..that's sad.
669	R: there's a lot there huh?
670	PS: yeah! (laugh.)
671	R: What got you interested in doing this study?
672	PS: oh! Um...because I like to help out people when they're doing research studies.//
673	R:// uh huh//
674	PS: I always feel like oh! Cool! Ya know//
675	R:// (inaudible)
676	PS:// and I'm just interested in how ya know different people think and different topics.
677	R:um hm.
678	PS: umm..umm.. what else.. cause I took that gender class//
679	R: hmmm..um hm..um hm.
680	PS:and I haven't thought about the class for a while so I'd like to think about ya know.//
681	R: umhm.//
682	PS:// different ..different topics from um class. Ya know so that that got me interested//
683	R:// uh huh.
684	PS:// So..ya know what another topic that got me interested was that kinda stuck with me from the class
685	was the issue of fertility .?
686	R: um hm.
687	PS:we kinda just touched on it it was pretty broad...um we brought up the issue um..of whether or not I
688	think there was an article like (in exaggerated voice) Are you a real woman if you can't have children.
689	R: wow!
690	PS: kinda thing ...and ya know and we had talked about that and that kinda stuck with me ..I..I never
691	thought that you weren't//
692	R: um hm.
693	PS: I didn't think that was a prerequisite that ok..in order for you to be a woman you had to have children
694	cause I know that that there are women who can't have children and whatever..and then like myself like
695	there's a question whether or not I can//
696	R:// umm(empathic tone)
697	PS:but to me ..I was like I'm not any less of a woman or inferior or whatever ! ya know!
698	R: um hm.
699	PS: because I look at it as you don't have to be a biological mother but you can be mother to children of
700	other relationships.. ..you can be a foster mother or can adopt you can be a mentor there's totally different
701	ways you don't have to birth..actually birth a child.//
702	R: //um hm.//
703	PS://well.
704	R: it sounds like that struck a chord for you.
705	PS:yeah! Well what happened wa I never even thought about it until//
706	R:// uh huh//

707	PS:// until I went to college..and my boyfriend at the time..like I was going through different things like I
708	was back and forth to the doctors..like going to the OBGYN and they were saying well we're not sure
709	because you have this and this and that so whatever so of course he was my boyfriend so I was telling
710	him about it and//
711	R:// um hm.//
712	PS:// and he says to me oh! Well (TONE FROM HOSPITAL INTERCOM GOES OFF) Ya know you
713	won't be a real woman anymore if you can't have kids!
714	R: wow!
715	PS: and of course ya know I was appalled. I mean the thought never I mean never crossed my mind and
716	then in the class. They brought it up again//
717	R:// uh huh//
718	PS:there were issues about that and there were some women who really feel that. Ya know. and they go
719	to fertility clinics and they do like all these things to have a baby they feel they get depressed because
720	they can't//
721	R:// uh huh.//
722	PS://and that was amazing to me like wow! Ya know?//
723	R://uh huh.//
724	PS://I'm sitting here like 22 years old and I don't know whether I can or can't have a kid and I'm like oh!
725	Whatever! Ya know//
726	R:// uh huh//
727	PS:// I don't care . and there's like all these people that have a really big problem with it.//
728	R:// um hm.//
729	PS:// and that struck a chord..umwe didn't generate too much discussion in regards to that topic I guess
730	because none of us were married in the class//
731	R:// um hm//
732	PS:// and ya know we were graduating college but it wasn't really a time to think about having kids and I
733	was the only one in the class that it really effected in the group. And I was like well I kinda know that I
734	probably can't. Like do you know what I mean?
735	R: uh huh.
736	PS: so we didn't really talk about that that much..//
737	R:// Well..you know what .. I wonder about that maybe you weren't the only one in that class//
738	PS:// right! And then nobody nobody spoke up //
739	R: right//
740	PS:// yeah and maybe I was the only one ya know brave enough to talk about it! //
741	R:// so were you..you were able to talk about it?
742	PS:// oh yeah!! I talk about it I don't care I kinda look at it like . Well it's who I am //
743	R://uh huh//
744	PS://and I'm not gonna get all upset about..Cause I can't.... like well. Whatever ya know?
745	R:// uh huh.//
746	PS:// but yeah it was I...I..guess cause people just ya know they look at that whole going back to that
747	traditional role.//
748	R:// uh huh//
749	PS:// of a woman wife mother..and if you can't be mother like what are you doing? Ya know?//
750	R:// um hm....but you know what something I'm thinking about as we're talking is kinda you're saying
751	that you don't think about this too much or you thought about the class right away when you saw like the
752	poster for this or whatever..but it does really ..sound to me like these things are something you think
753	about a lot. //
754	PS:// uh huh..//
755	R:// Not just gender but all... all these issues..kind of marginalization issues....race religion..//
756	PS:// Yeah! When they come up//
757	R:// yeah! That you're real aware of of that//
758	PS:// yeah! Like different things will spark..Do you know what I mean?
759	R: uh huh.
760	PS:like um maybe certain topics like if I see something on the news or if I'm talking to somebody about
761	something ...or...//

762	R:// uh huh.//
763	PS:// yeah. You're right it will it will come up.
764	R: and it sounds like for you ..you kind of take that for granted like you assume that like anyone would
765	notice that?
766	PS:Yes! Yes...you're right and I didn't start realizing that I took it for granted until graduate school.//
767	R:// uh huh.//
768	PS://when I was in class I was one of the youngest..like second youngest in my program.//
769	R:// really?//
770	PS:// And speaking about different issues I was just looking at these people and I was thinking..you're
771	going to be a social worker!?
772	R: you were the only one who had this perspective that you do?
773	PS: um ..no. there were there were....there were a lot of us that did but there were a lot of us that didn't.
774	R: Wow!
775	PS:And I was very surprised at that considering they wanted to go into the field.
776	R: uh huh.
777	PS: It seemed like they were so closed minded and.....it seemed to me that they had this strict moral
778	view//
779	R:// um hm.//
780	PS:// and it had to be that way or the highway kinda I kinda look at it like that conservative right wing
781	way of thinking..ya know?//
782	R:// um hm.//
783	PS://like all right well this is how it is according to what I believe and you can't deviate from that ...And
784	if you do..well.. You're wrong!//
785	R:// uh huh.//
786	PS:// and that's that's how they came off //
787	R:// um hm//
788	PS://and I was like. What!? I would be so amazed at some of the stuff that would come out of their
789	mouths//
790	R:// uh huh.
791	PS://I wouldn't even say anything in class ! my eyes would just like get huge. Ya know?//
792	R:// um hm//
793	PS:// at some of the stuff that they would talk about like gender issues //
794	R:// um hm.//
795	PS://or race a lot of it was like welfare reform//
796	R:// um hm.
797	PS://cause I was in grad school '98-2000 so it was when it was starting//
798	R:// um hm//
799	PS:// like the whole welfare reform initiative and it was going to start kicking in and we were looking at
800	that issue and ya know the aid to families with dependent children..(lowers voice) I mean yeah there are
801	people who just sit on there ass and collect a check.//
802	R:// uh huh//
803	PS://there are a lot of people who don't ! and some of the social workers were looking at that as there are
804	these lazy people who don't want to do anything and oh we should get rid of it and I'm like (smirks)
805	R: wow!
806	PS: Are you crazy! Like to me it didn't make sense.
807	R :um hm.
808	PS: and when you would try to bring up other issues and have them look at it... like I'm not trying to
809	change your opinion//
810	R:// umhm.//
811	PS:// but at least could you look at these things?//
812	R:// um hm.//
813	PS:// No! they don't want to do it! They don't want to do it ..cause at least I'm open to... I think I'm
814	...even though there's some things that I really feel strongly about..or I don't agree//
815	R://um hm//
816	PS://or whatever..ok well let me hear your point//

817	R:// um hm.//
818	PS:// I 'd like to hear what you think//
819	R:// um hm.//
820	PS: and maybe it'll change my thinking or I'm willing to talk about it//
821	R:// but valuing ...just valuing someone else's perspective?
822	PS: Yeah! Cause I think it's important.//
823	R:// um hm.//
824	PS:// I think it's very important and I think that's what makes it a wonderful place to live ya know in
825	terms of being in the world because there's so many different views. And everything I don't have to agree
826	with you and you don't have to agree with me..but ya know//
827	R:// uh huh.//
828	PS:// that's that's what makes it interesting.to hear.
829	R:// uh huh.//
830	PS://but they (very low voice) but they were just so closed minded ...no ...sometimes..oh! ya know...how
831	could?..my classes sometimes ..I would just get so frustrated..and cause I couldn't believe ya know that
832	people were entering this field and thinking like that!
833	R: uh huh....How do you think gender influenced your decision to enter the field...or do you think it
834	influenced ...Maybe it didn't? (RR : here I think I am pursuing this even though PS has not identified
835	this as an issue)
836	PS: Ummm.....hmmm....I'm thinkin..did it? It didn't influence personally..cause initially I wanted to be a
837	psychologist//
838	R://(laugh)//
839	PS:// When I was in undergrad I worked as a research assistant for this woman who was working her
840	dissertation and I was like (exaggerated tone) I don't want to do this (laugh)
841	R: (laugh)
842	PS:// that was the...oh no!
843	R: Really? The dissertation?
844	PS:// Oh no...yeah! The research? And the dissertation I do not want to do. Like I said.. ya know..what..I
845	don't mind like doing the research ...like I think that's fun but ..I was like that statistic stuff and then sittin
846	there and writing that book I was like no. that's not me. I'd wanna do like the hands on kinda ...like
847	hands on..just get in there and do it.//
848	R:// uh huh.//
849	PS://um..so that's how I made my choice to go into social work instead of keep going on up the//
850	R://uh huh.//
851	PS:// educational ladder for psychology. //
852	R://umhm.
853	PS: ummm..however. when I got out of grad school is when I noticed the vast! Proportion of women
854	compared to men//
855	R:// um hm.//
856	PS:// in the field . because they didn't have social work as a.. an undergrad major //
857	R:// um hm.//
858	PS:// at my undergraduate university I didn't notice. When I got into grad school.... Is when..I noticed. I
859	think we could count on one hand how many men were in our program.
860	R: wow.
861	PS:// umm..and they all wanted to go into administrative type positions.. L do you know what I mean?/
862	R: um hm.
863	PS:// it wasn't like um..direct they wanted to do like direct care or counseling type things. And actually
864	at the the jobs I've been at since graduation I've noticed who's in charge it's primarily men. And even
865	when um there are men in the direct line like here ya know //
866	R:// uh huh.//
867	PS://in the social work department you kinda look at the men as the ones who can do things a little bit
868	better and a little//
869	R:// wow.//
870	PS://ya know and that kinda pisses me off but..
871	R:But what? So what's that like and then we'll stop in a minute.

872	PS:// I don't know why . I don't know why that is.//
873	R:// um hm.//
874	PS://To me ..I'm like ...the way like I look at say this social worker over here I don't know why he's
875	like any better than this social worker over her however he gets preference for different things and I guess
876	I kinda wonder...well... and I guess because I'm black I ...I look at race a little more sensitively.//
877	R:// um hm.//
878	PS://I look at it well in combination is it because he's a white male?//
879	R:// um hm.//
880	PS:// as opposed to the majority of the social work staff.. well it's not majority anymore ..it used to be..
881	but the majority of social work staffs are black females....like ya know what I mean?
882	R: uh huh.
883	PS: is that the issue is that why?
884	R: um hm
885	PS:// I kinda look at that..especially here at (named institution). Not really at (named institution) even
886	though I did notice that because there's primarily more women.//
887	R:// um hm.//
888	PS://that's where I came from before I came here. Is more women but the scattering of men it's all//
889	R:// so it's real striking?
890	PS:right! And then here I notice it because there's just a little more men.. and a close knit group .//
891	R:// umhm.//
892	PS://yeah I kinda think about that in the back of my mind a little bit.
893	R:// um hm.//
894	PS:// like is that why? Ya know what I mean?
895	R:yep!
896	PS: yeah! It'll come up . I don't know whether it is or it isn't. but..it does come up in my head
897	sometimes.//
898	R:// um hm.//
899	PS:// (under breath) I don't know why.
900	R: No ..it sounds like again.. you're sensitive to these things.//
901	PS://um hm (laugh).//
902	R:// yeah! And you're aware I mean you're very aware. ..Let me ask you one..one question. Do you
903	feel.. would you consider yourself a feminist if someone asked you? ..Would you identify with that ..or.
904	PS: Umm...//
905	R: you're making a face that's kind of ...//
906	PS:// you know what's funny? (laugh) I guess I would say no..and the reason why..I..I personally don't
907	have a formal definition for what I think feminism is...for myself ..I never defined it..so//
908	R://um hm.//
909	PS://so that's why I don't see myself as one cause I never defined ...//
910	R:// uh huh.//
911	PS:um but then ya know you get the stereotypical view of feminists as like these bra burning women
912	running around and saying we're equal..ya know..we can do whatever we want but you know what I
913	mean. Like..God..I was like I don't identify with that but then I I don't have a definition for myself so//
914	R:// uh huh.//
915	PS: I don't know. I feel like I I don't know enough to form a definition for myself//
916	R://um hm//
917	PS://so I feel like maybe I'd have to know a little more about it ..read up on it..//
918	R:um hm.
919	Here it seems like PS is offering a lot of reasoning for why she does not identify as a feminist for my
920	behalf since I told her at the beginning that I do identify as a feminist. I think this may show that she felt
921	pressured to offer experiences that fit with feminist ideology . I also think that this is not entirely the case
922	since she often disputed or minimized her feelings that fit with feminism. Either way I think I was trying
923	to encourage her to express her hesitance and show that this was fine with my frequent um hm
924	interruptions).
925	<i>PS: so that I could make up an educated decision instead of just fragmented things//</i>
926	<i>R://um hm.//</i>

927	<i>PS:// from what I learned over the years that just isn't enough ...//</i>
928	<i>R:// um hm//</i>
929	<i>PS://for me.</i>
930	R: um hm
931	PS:so that's why I'd say no.//
932	R:// um hm..
933	PS: (laugh)
934	R: yeah! Good that's a great answer! Ok well you know what let me ask you this..and then maybe we can
935	stop for today (TONE FROM HOSPITAL INTERCOM SOUNDS) Do you have any questions for me?
936	PS: No! um um
937	R: about any of this? How has this felt talking about all these things?
938	PS: It feels ..it feels good felt good....Cause you know it's it's nice to be able to express you know your
939	views in an open atmosphere...
940	R: um hm.
941	PS:and then see what you think about them..you know what I mean?
942	R:// um hm.
943	PS: I think that's really ..really interesting. I 'd like to see how somebody else thinks //
944	<i>(RR: PS says this but I feel that I rarely offered opinions or feedback.. I have a feeling this will change</i>
945	<i>when I go back to do analysis.)</i>
946	R:// um hm..um hm.//
947	PS:// because you know.. you just.. you're in your head and you just do it all the time //
948	R:// right (laugh)
949	PS:// ohh I think this and this and it's nice to hear somebody else and get feedback.//
950	R:// um hm.//
951	PS://ya know//
952	R:// um hm//
953	PS:// and use it to use it for research and answer certain questions..so I think it's very very interesting.
954	R:// (both laughing): Great!...Good! I've enjoyed it too. It's fun so good. Let's stop there.
955	TAPE ENDS.
956	<i>RR: As I complete the transcription process I am aware that I had a difficult time coming up with</i>
957	<i>questions and knowing when to pursue something more. I am also aware that the transcript interview</i>
958	<i>time was shorter and that my reflections are critical instead of reflective.)</i>
959	

APPENDIX C

Interview Checklist

Participant Interview Checklist

First Interview

- I. Review Participation Consent.
 - A. Consent forms (sign 2, 1 given to participant and 1 stays with me).
 - B. Review issues involved in participation in a research project: ie. risks and benefits, time commitments etc,
 - A. (The second meeting will take place in about a month, at which time I will present you with an initial analysis of our conversation. The second meeting will be a time for you to offer your opinions, critique, disagreement, and clarification about my interpretations. Based on your feedback I will make some changes, but I want you to know that I will not necessarily change all of the things per your recommendation. What I will do is include all of your feedback in the data. The third and final meeting will take place over the phone. We will review your feedback about the final analysis that you will have received in the mail prior to the phone contact.
 - C. Prepare audio-tape

- II. My agenda.
 - B. Feminist ideology-My goal is to disrupt oppressive power dynamics that I believe shape our current way of being. Because of this, I believe it is important for you to know that this is my agenda and that this will influence my interpretations of our dialogue. I also want you to know that a focus of this study is to empower both of us to talk about the issues that we face as women, both positive and negative.

- III. Interview Questions:
 1. Tell me of experiences in which gender became an issue for you. When are you or have you been most aware of your gender (including but not limited to experiences that have related to participating in the gender focused class)?
 2. What was problematic or affirming about this experience, and why.
 3. What did this experience bring up in terms of how you see yourself.
 4. What provoked your decision to participate in a gender focused course.
 5. What have you been most surprised by in your experience of being in the gender class?
 6. Has this experience changed the way you think of yourself?
 7. What makes this difficult (if she pauses or expresses difficulty)?
 8. What are your feelings about the word feminism?
 9. Do you consider yourself a feminist?-Why or why not?
 10. When do you feel like you are trying to fit into an accepted role for women, and when not?

Second Interview

1. Review issues of participation.
 1. Participant has the right to drop out of study at any time, and has the right to request that information that leads to concerns about vulnerability be altered accordingly.
 2. Set up audio-tapes and remind participant that tapes are locked and will be destroyed at the completion of the project, along with any forms that reveal their identity.
 3. Gather contact information for the third and final contact that will take place by phone. My phone number will be given and I will request that participants contact me if they relocate prior to our third contact. Third contact will occur approximately a month after second contact.
 2. Review individualized narratives by giving this to participants along with transcripts of the five readings and a pen.
 1. Individualized narratives will be read by participants for the purpose of providing feedback about the draft from the first meeting.
 2. Feedback should be along lines of concerns about their individualized portrayals of themselves, disagreement with my interpretation and any information that the participant feels may contribute to the study.
- III. Follow up questions will be asked and elicited from participants.

Third Interview

1. Send documents to participants and follow up to ensure that the documents were received.
2. Contact participants once they have received documents and review them over the phone to enable participants to give feedback about the finalized narratives.
3. Tell participants how to access finalized version.
4. Thank participants for their dedication to this project, and encourage them to contact me should concerns arise.

APPENDIX D

Second Interview Notes

Second Interview Notes:

Participant Ann

Notes to be integrated into individual narrative.

Date of interview: 7/29/03 at approximately 4:30p.m.-6:00p.m. at Ann's job site.

Disagreement- Age-Ann didn't agree that she saw herself as old, in fact she said that she felt younger and more immature than she was in terms of age. I told Ann that she mentioned age and feeling older throughout the transcript when she was talking about her history and remembering stories. She agreed that recalling stories and things happening so long ago did make her feel like an "old historian."

Aside from recalling history, Ann did not experience herself as an old person. I was very validating about Ann's disagreement, and hoped that this would encourage Ann to continue to feel empowered enough to voice disagreement or other feedback.

Gender focused course-Studied-Women's issues, like health, feminist theory. Ann said that her professor was very well versed and this was not a course that people took to get an easy grade because of the amount of research required. Ann did not feel that the amount of work was a drawback of the importance of the course. Ann felt this course was validating and necessary. She also joked about the change in title to gender studies, since the "other" sex was often talked about.

Positive aspects of being marked as woman-Protections, such as the draft. Ann acknowledged that this was not necessarily positive or negative, but that it was something that stood out because we as women know that we are not going to be drafted. She acknowledged that this was a hard question to answer because she likes being a woman and joked that she had never been anything else. She acknowledged that it was more negative when she was a child, because boys had more freedom. She also felt it was positive that women were able to spend more time with babies, especially when they are first born, and expressed hope that parents would be given more opportunities to parent with more social support.

Expansion-Gender Oppression:

Memory of altar girl-In first grade in Catholic school, Ann helped setting up the church before mass, and loved to work with the sister whose job it was to do so. Ann voiced her desire to serve as an altar girl and she was shocked when she was told she could not because she was a girl. Ann said this "hit [her] like a tone of bricks." Ann explained that she thought of many examples of gender being an issue following our first meeting.

Gender –different expectations about Ann's future.

Ann shared her story of her father encouraging her to drop out of high school her senior year to go to secretarial school. We both laughed about this. Even though she was not sure she wanted to go to college, she knew that going to a secretarial school and working until she got married was not something she wanted.

I asked Ann what her goals were at this time. She talked of being “a mess” and I validated this, since Ann was on her own at the age of 16 due to the death of her mother and the complicated family situation. She acknowledged that initially she thought she would live a life similar to her mother’s—going to bars and getting married, because she was also using alcohol heavily at the time, and did not know of other options. She knew that this option also didn’t look good to her, so when college came up it seemed like something to do. She talked of her grades deteriorating as her mother’s alcoholism progressed. After the death of her mother, Ann initially returned to live with the man she identified as her father but eventually chose to move out and return to the area she lived before her mother died. Ann’s identified father gave up legal rights, and she lived with her sister’s friend’s family and went to public school. While at public school, one of her teachers, a Black history teacher, encouraged her to go to college and helped her each step of the way to get her transcripts and financial papers together. She attributed this teacher’s interest and encouragement as the motivating factor to go to college and ultimately change her life.

Ann’s grades were not always good since she acted out a lot in school. She referenced one story of dropping a rum bottle in her favorite teacher’s wastebasket. This same teacher was encouraging her to attend class regardless of her sobriety. Ann attributed her desire to change her life around to this teacher’s encouragement.

Ann had a difficult time in her first year of college because she was trying to live both lives—drinking and using and studying at the same time. Following this year she realized she could not keep going in this way and changed her priorities to school, and away from her expectation that she would die from using as her mother did.

Minority program—not fitting in due to class oppression—Ann explained that she entered college in the **Minority program** that was developed for economically challenged students who wanted to attend college. Ann reported that this program typically helped students of racial minority groups. Ann and I both laughed when she revealed that this program was called the “chance program” because of the implication that economically challenged students were assumed to be a risk. We agreed that this was an example of class prejudice. Ann did feel that she fit into this group because she was white. Ann also reported that she was invited to become a sorority sister at one of the black sororities because she was assumed to be a racial minority by way of being a part of the Chance program. Ann’s teacher told her that she would be seen as middle class, even though she lived in the inner city and did not have money. Ann recognized after she entered college that this was an assumption made by others about her, and differences in terms of value systems made her stand out from other people who may have been within the same economic category.

Coming out: police force decision expanded—As we joked about not being able to audio-tape the final phone conversation, Ann talked about her choice between becoming a police officer and being lesbian. She reported that she was afraid that she would be penalized because she was lesbian, and this deterred her from applying.

Smoking divided by gender-

Ann referenced differences in smoking areas and expectations of females in the Catholic school system. Women were not to smoke and were given fines if they were caught on grounds, or even off grounds if they were wearing uniforms. Male students were allowed to smoke in designated areas and were given lower fines than the girls, if they were caught smoking outside of designated areas. Ann convinced her father that she should change schools, largely because she hated it, and because she had to beg him for money every time tuition came around. She was able to convince him, largely because the importance of Catholic school was a priority of her mother's, and not that of her father's.

Ann wearing dresses- Ann insisted that she did not want to wear dresses and was quite happy not doing so. I pointed to the places in the transcript where Ann said sarcastically that this was not available for her as a choice. I tried to clarify that I saw this as the issue for her and she agreed. She laughed as she recalled an experience when she wore a dress without ironing it when she was going out to play "army." Both Ann and I laughed about this as she spoke of her mother's horrified reaction.

Expansion- Ann expressed concern about the relevance on more stories. I dismissed her concern and encouraged her to give feedback that felt relevant to her. She talked of her **racial identity** and why that was such an issue for her. She talked of being the result of an affair between her mother and another man. This affair was a factor in the divorce between her mother and the person she identified as her father, which in turn led her sisters to resent her. Because Ann was darker than her sisters, she always wondered if she was different in some way. It was only later when she learned about having a different biological father, that Ann wondered if she was Puerto Rican, as she had been teased in her childhood. Ann kept this question a secret from her family, largely because of the prejudice that her family and others held for Puerto Rican people and because she picked up on her mother's hesitance to identify Ann as different. Ann recalled being surprised that her mother often reassured people in the neighborhood that all three of her daughters had the same father. She later realized that the name was Italian, and she noted that this signified a step up from Puerto Rican culture for her family. Ann added that even though she identified as Caucasian all of her life, she wasn't always sure if this was true. Ann paused and indicated that she was not sure if she was being helpful. I reassured her that the information she provided was useful in our developing the narrative about her.

Revealing family history- Ann said she now had come to a place psychologically where she felt more comfortable disclosing this aspect of her life. She expressed concern about withholding information during the first session because she did not know me as well. She acknowledged that she did not discuss this with many people, because it did not seem relevant, but for our purposes it seemed important because gender was such an important part of these experiences. I went on to say that some more personal things may not need to be included because I did not want her to feel vulnerable. Upon further reflection, I feel that my concern was less relevant because Ann was telling me these things as a way to share the effects, both painful and liberating as they were for her. As such, I believe that these issues deserve to become an important part of our narrative for this project.

Butler theory of loss-Ann really liked this theory and talked of her own fears about not fitting in and loss when she began to consider herself as a lesbian. She talked of feeling terrified that she would talk in her sleep, and her straight roommate would hear her. She admitted that she was afraid of being rejected, and wanted to fit in like everyone else.

- Talked of opening of “gay” high school and the idea that this was receiving so much resistance and the idea that this was still necessary.
- Talked of new shows highlighting gay stereotypes. We laugh and talk lightly about this. I connected this with Black face entertainers and the idea that we, in Western culture, want distance and entertainment from marginalized groups in a very circumscribed way.

Clarification-Men are allowed to not take gender issues seriously, and it was acceptable that gay and lesbian individuals were rejected because of their sexuality. Ann disagreed with this characterization of herself. I mentioned that she was sarcastic during these moments and I perhaps did not make this clear. Ann agreed and talked of her sarcasm as a way of getting her points across and added that perhaps since this was our first meeting, I did not interpret her this way. Ann clarified that she did not think it was not ok for men to dismiss gender issues. She also acknowledged that women in the women’s movement and gay and lesbian movement perhaps did have a point that **women should be put first in the title** because we have been dismissed and put second so many times-history and herstory. This was not clear in our first meeting because Ann focused primarily on her frustration about the arguing for argument’s sake. She went on to clarify that many times she felt frustrated by the arguments that arose to ensure that everyone was comfortable because this took away from their ability to **launch effective resistance strategies**. I affirmed Ann’s clarification of this issue because this was not clear in the first interview and was important in terms of how she views issues. I also talked of wondering about this when I was doing the analysis, because it seemed to me that fighting amongst ourselves was counter productive when so many others did not even recognize the struggles in the first place. Ann agreed with this idea and said this was why she often felt frustrated.

Clarification-Biological gender differences. Ann talked of believing that there was a difference, mentioning strength and testosterone. Ann could not come up with these physical markings during our first interview. I discussed post-structural theories of biological differences, where biological markers are questioned as a means of identifying difference. I explained that biological markers were often used as a way to justify difference and lead to a discussion of roots instead of what this difference meant in terms of oppression. Ann agreed, and acknowledged that she often “fell back” on this assumption. She also talked about the ways that this assumption did seem to cover up the issues that women faced, and was damaging because it was often used to justify this oppressive difference.

Clarification-Ann reported that she was also active in the “gay pride” movement in the 1980’s as well as the 1970’s. I validated that this was good to know.

Wrapping up: following the review of the transcript.

I acknowledged Ann's help in this project, and explained that her views were similar to my conceptualization of gender issues that made it easier for me to relate and use for the project. Ann expressed concern about being redundant and telling me things that she already mentioned. I went on to reassure her that her narrative was very helpful clarifying the phenomenon.

I changed the topic to her continued concern for me being comfortable and ok even as she read the narrative. She said it was interesting to get this feedback and joked that this was even a little "creepy." We laughed about this, and I asked again if she felt ok about the narrative that was emerging through my interpretations. I specifically called attention to her comment about feeling vulnerable at the end of our first interview, and asked if she wanted me to change anything to help her feel more comfortable. Ann dismissed this even when I encouraged her to think about this issue.

Activism through project: She explained that she told stories that felt important and feeling willing to take risks. She called attention to her sarcasm and countered this by saying seriously that in her way she felt she was doing something by participating in this project. I affirmed this and explained that this was also part of my motivation in developing this project. I referenced Ann's answer the first time when asked about her interest in the project and reminded her that she said that she wanted to help someone doing research because she empathized with this position. I told her that this surprised me, even though this fit with her desire to take care of others, because I had anticipated that she would say something about being drawn to the project because gender was the focus. She admitted that as she considered the topic she was more intrigued by the project. I expressed my appreciation of her willingness to voice her experiences and be so articulate about the issues that we discussed. We laughed and Ann attributed her articulateness to "years of therapy." I also linked this to the idea that as women we are so adept at watching others and thinking about perceptions and assumptions.

Ending interview: Discussed third meeting, contact information, and process of talking on the phone to clarify the final narrative.

Second Interview Notes:

Participant Samantha

Notes to be integrated into individual narrative.

Date of interview: 8/8/03 at approximately 5:00p.m.-6:15p.m. Samantha's job site.

Pace of second interview-Samantha's first comment is to apologize for her pace being quick. She did not say that this was what she was having a reaction to, but needed me to prompt her to explain that this was why she was laughing as she read. Throughout the second interview, I was the one to encourage Samantha to tell me her reactions because she would laugh and nod her head as she read but would not explain her reaction without first being prompted to do so. Samantha's apology suggests that she was feeling self-conscious about her behavior and this discomfort probably made her less willing to share her views.

Gender covered over by biology-With encouragement, Samantha explained that she was nodding her head because she agreed that conceptualizing gender as a biological marker made it difficult to dispute.

Gendered oppression unseen-Samantha also agreed that she did not identify gender as an issue because she did not see her mother as someone hindered by her gender.

Women losing their husbands-Samantha acknowledged that she had not identified the dangers or consequences of men losing their spouses. She also added an example of a "new experience" of a male co-worker who recently announced that he was leaving his job because his wife made more money and he wanted to be home more with his kids because he saw them effected negatively by both parents working. Samantha described this as a "new experience for her" because of the environment, culture, and class structure that she grew up in. I encouraged her to say more about this, and called attention to the idea that she was saying that this was a new experience for her and not others. She explained that she heard many stories of men leaving their jobs where she worked because the men made less than their spouses, but added that outside of this context this did not seem to be the norm. After Samantha agreed, I went on to say that men leaving their jobs because their female partner made more money would still be surprising to a lot of people in this culture.

Males moving up the ranks-Samantha laughed and with prompting explained that she kept seeing this and this did not make her happy.

Levi-Strauss- Samantha commented that she was not sure that differences between men and women were necessary. She pointed out that men were not always the "breadwinners" and vice versa. She added that the idea that men and women making babies was fundamental for the survival of the human society "of course" in terms of biological make up, but she said that she was not sure it was "necessary." I reminded Samantha that she brought up many ways that babies could be created or mothered aside from women bearing the children. Samantha agreed. I went on to link this idea to post-

structural theorists who debate about the changes that would take place in society if this was no longer assumed to be women's role.

Gender as an issue of oppression, secondary to race- Samantha clarified that this was secondary to her because in her experience people saw her as Black first and then saw her as a woman.

Question –Rubin and Wittig-new conceptualization of women-Samantha asked if they were advocating for a new conceptualization of gender different from men and women. I answered yes and went on to say that I interpreted this to mean that we would break away from gender as something that exists only on a two sided continuum. Instead, gender would be looked at in terms of oppressive dynamics to investigate the effects of dividing gender into two distinct categories. I added that this issue with having only two gender categories seemed to constantly lead to a comparative analysis. I related this to oppression and the idea that we would have to come up with something else, hopefully something that was less oppressive. Samantha nodded her head and seemed to be thinking about this as she returned to her reading.

Samantha and her boyfriend –Samantha looking for choices-Samantha commented simply that “that was right!”

Butler-Samantha said that she could see that.

Feeling like a lady-Samantha read the passage and said that she never thought about that. She agreed that the things that men did for women did relate to different gender roles. She referenced helping her boyfriend feel “manly” and noted that his “machismo” was an important role to respect and act accordingly. Samantha agreed that the things aimed at women were about making them feel incompetent. She said that if she opened the door or pulled out a chair for her boyfriend he would like it initially but would eventually start to feel incompetent, like “what, I can't open a door?” She said that she never felt this way when her boyfriend did things like this for her because this was how ladies were supposed to be treated. She added that her boyfriend's motivation was to make her feel special and not something he felt he had to do, nor was it something he always did.

MSW_Master's in small wages-Samantha laughed, and I told her that I loved that joke and had wanted to include it.

MSW: Men at work are seen as better-Samantha said when it came to job choices that she never thought about choosing her profession based on gender. However, she “admitted” that “even she” could see that her profession was a helping profession and that it was “pretty obvious” that there are so many more women in helping professions. She noted that her boyfriend's profession was business related, and this fit with traditional male gender roles. She spoke about her frustrations with herself for assuming that men could do things better, or they should earn more money than women. I validated that this feeling was a part of the larger structure and prescriptions for gender. I pointed out that she had a very good insight the last meeting, that we learn to look at men

in this way, and have this expectation “ingrained” in some way. Samantha also referenced nursing as a primarily female profession, and referenced a movie where the male character is teased because he was not a doctor, or somehow more on the “front line” in a position of authority.

Butler-Gender as effect and performance-Samantha read this passage and said that she thought this was a “wonderful notion.” She started to silence herself and I encouraged her to talk about the things she was thinking. She explained that if we had more choices and if it was not so heavily defined by these strict stereotypical markings that this would be better but would be too much for many people to “handle.’ She noted that all of the “other issues” such as homosexuality would come up and people would have to “think out of the box” which would be difficult. She added again that she liked the idea and that it made sense to her. I asked Samantha where she thought this strong alignment with gender differences came from. Samantha said that she never thought about it because it had always been there. She added that in “school work and family” and even religiously, people justified gender differences with the Bible. Because gender was in all aspects of our lives, this made it difficult to look at and makes it hard to change. She also attributed not noticing gender as a mark of oppression to the idea that it was everywhere and in everything. I validated Samantha’s uncertainty, because she seemed to be apologetic about admitting that she did not think about gender until later in life. I disclosed that this was exactly the issue that made it so difficult to think about and figure new ways to conceptualize gender.

Feminist’s as bra burners-Samantha laughed about this title. As she read this section further, she said that it was right that there was a stigma attached to identifying as a feminist. She explained that anyone who did not immediately ascribe to the traditional gender categories or any other norm, that the person would be stigmatized and seen as a “rebel.” She explained that “people who degrade feminism don’t want to tell you the truth” about it. She said that the things that she had heard about feminism were not true, but I missed my opportunity to ask if Samantha’s willingness to identify as a feminist had changed.

Self-critical-Samantha was embarrassed that she said “like” a number of times, and added that both she and her boyfriend did this a lot. Samantha attributed this to the area she lived throughout her life. I encouraged her that I had not identified this as a pattern throughout the transcribing process, and validated that transcribing spoken words usually read poorly.

Samantha initiated-She read the passage where I discussed my concern that Samantha’s hesitation to speak was because I did not provide enough openness. Samantha quickly dismissed this and said that her hesitation came from her concerns about things being “irrelevant.” I validated that Samantha’s comments were very insightful. I interrupted Samantha from reading because I wanted to connect our conversation during the first interview, where we spoke about her assumption that others would see things as she did and be aware and open minded. Samantha agreed that she often took for granted the insights she had and assumed that others would recognize issues that she identified.

Wrapping up: When Samantha finished reading the narrative, she commented that the narrative was “very, very good!” I really tried to encourage Samantha to ask questions or comment on anything that did not really seem accurate for her, and she summarily denied this. I went on to pose a few follow up questions that I developed since the first meeting.

Positive effects of being female-Samantha started by saying that she felt women’s **bodies were more attractive**. She countered that this was funny, but I discouraged Samantha’s disarming comment because I wanted to encourage her to be honest. I was also encouraged to hear that she felt good about her body when so much of the commentary about women’s bodies is critical. Samantha added that we had “more attractive organs,” so much for abhorrence for women’s nothing to see!- Irigaray would be proud! Samantha also said that she thought it was a benefit that **women could have children**. Prior to listing attributes of gender roles, Samantha was careful to note that not all men or women were this way. She added that women looked at things differently, in terms of **feelings**, and I added that there was a general value system of typically feminine roles, such as care-taking. Samantha agreed that she valued these attributes and felt this emotional connection was positive. She noted that men’s ability to separate their emotions could come in handy in certain situations as well.

Positive aspects of being male-She also added that men in this society had more **opportunities and power** unless the men were **in marginalized groups**. She explained that racial markers made it **harder to live up to expectations of males**, and thus placed a lot of extra pressure on these males. Samantha laughed, and preceded her comment with this is so “stupid,” and went on to talk about the sanitary advantages of being able to “**pee standing up**” since this was so much more sanitary. I added that it was also faster and less difficult. Samantha added that there was **not as much upkeep**, since men don’t have to have their hair done as often or worry about make-up like women do. She also said that **aging** was another issue that plagued women because men were seen as sexy and women of the same age were definitely not.

Biological difference-I asked if Samantha did believe there was a biological difference. Samantha said that she had someone justify that men were superior because women were physically the “receivers” in sex, while men were the “givers.” Samantha acknowledged that she could see people using this as an excuse, but she did not subscribe to this idea herself. She also brought up that biological markers were the basis from which the separation between gender occurred in our society. I encouraged Samantha that she was doing great, and being very informative.

Black women and White women-Samantha first referenced a larger cultural argument, and noted that she was not an anthropologist, but that gender roles would probably be seen differently with **different expectations in different cultures**. She added that in Western culture there are differences that she has seen in terms of different cultures within Western culture. She referenced an example Hispanic culture, and explained that male dominance with respect to decision making was strict. Samantha acknowledged my groan and commented that even though she did not ascribe to this, this was typical of her experience of Hispanic culture. In describing African American culture, Samantha said it was “**muddy**” and difficult to determine what kinds of gender roles existed because in

her experience there were seldom men present to serve as an example. She also noted that over 50% of African American families are single parent households. She also added that despite the gender of the care-taker, the idea was that only one gender was represented. We both commented on the sadness of this and the feeling of loss that this left with Samantha. I asked Samantha directly if she felt that she had different issues to contend with as an African American woman than myself as a white woman, and she said yes. She described herself as having **two marks of oppression, and was at the “bottom of the barrel”** because of this. She said that she often faced assumptions that others could do a better job than she, and so on. Samantha believed that African American women believed that men should be the head of the household, but since they were not there women had to take this up. I brought up her mother’s willingness to take up her role with little doubt that she could not assume this role. Samantha agreed and said that she had talked to her mother about this and than her mother had not considered any other options because she did not want to go to her mother and be on welfare. Samantha sees her brother taking on the care-taking role, but could not understand where this role model came from for him. She did not acknowledge that her mother was his role model of how to take care of others.

Interview effects:

Samantha reported that she and her boyfriend talked about their differences in gender role expectations and that this helped them to **figure out what expectations they had of each other**. She was able to assert herself to her boyfriend, and tell him that she did not want him to pressure her by telling her what to do, particularly in reference to the incident when she was hurt at her job. She said that she discovered that his desire was not to control her but that he was a “problem solver,” in his job and his relationships and he wanted to be helpful. She reported feeling much better about their expectations of each other and being better able to listen to each other’s needs. They also addressed the care-taking of her daughter and how they can work as a team instead of working at opposite goals. I affirmed her desire to speak up and talk about these roles instead of staying quiet. We discussed negotiating when to speak up and I affirmed the idea that knowing when to be quiet could be both good and bad. Samantha referenced an example of “blowing up and cursing” at everyone at work and her resentment that this is what it took for others to listen to her.

APPENDIX E

Third Interview Notes

Third Interview Notes:

Participant Ann

Notes to be integrated into individual narrative.

Date of interview: 8/26/03 at approximately 8:00p.m.-8:30p.m.

Meeting was conducted over the telephone.

Ann's praise for the account- Ann began our interview by saying that the account was "quite impressive." She noted that she was glad that I was doing feminist research because it renewed her hope that people are "still out there doing this stuff."

Clarification- Ann said that there were a few inaccuracies in her account of high school. She started by saying that this clarification may not be relevant to the project. I dismissed this, and reminded her that it was important to me that her voice be heard in the way that she chose. Ann clarified that she was 14 instead of 16 years old when her mother died. She also added that she initially stayed with friends of her sister's, until she convinced her father (who was living in a different state), that she should leave private school for public school. Because she could not enter public school without documentation that she was residing with her legal guardian, she relocated to her father's residence. Ann stayed with him for a "quarter" of the year before leaving for basketball camp, and then attaining emancipation. Following emancipation, Ann returned to her hometown and again took up residence with the friends of her sister's that she had lived with previously.

Validation- "fighter" -When Ann finished with her clarifications, I remarked that she had such a difficult childhood. I also called her a "fighter" and thanked her for being such an inspiration to the project. Ann agreed with the fighter label, and noted that telling these stories reminded her of how hard she had worked and how amazing it was that she was in her current position.

Patriarchy as silence-Ann pointed out that she was very struck by the section that talked about patriarchy as a discourse of silence. She noted that she rarely thought about things this way, but agreed that silence was a large part of the marginalization that she experienced. She noted jokingly that she "didn't hate all men" and agreed with me, men were also constricted by the silence that is demanded by gender roles and other identifying markers.

Endings-As Ann and I ended our conversation, we exchanged titles of feminist literature and particular authors. Ann also noted that I had come into her life at a time of transition when she needed to be reminded what she stood for, and what she valued. I thanked her for this compliment and disclosed that the motivating factor for this study was my desire to connect with women who also sought forums for gender discussions. I thanked her for her commitment and the life that she gave to this project. I gave her the information needed to access the final dissertation, and reminded her to call me if she had any lingering concerns over the next few weeks. We wished each other well, and ended our interview.

Third Interview Notes:

Participant Samantha

Notes to be integrated into individual narrative.

Date of interview: 8/20/03 at approximately 9:30p.m.-10:00p.m.

Meeting conducted over the telephone.

Context of interview- ‘Samantha’ called me after receiving and reviewing the individualized account that emerged after our first two meetings. ‘Samantha’ dismissed my gratitude about calling me instead of waiting for me to reach her. She was focused and noted that she marked a few places that she wanted to review and set about doing so.

Difference in gender role expectations and differences in debt- ‘Samantha’ pointed to page 17, and added that part of desire to date someone who worked in a different role was that she valued exposure to different perspectives. She also explained that she liked to be in a “helper, “motherly” role, in keeping with her professional social work role. She believed that having a partner who was similarly “care-taking” could be “too much.” ‘Samantha’ valued different perspectives because in her words it “helps [her] grow” because it enables her to question her values. She laughed as she added that she also feared being “bored” in a relationship and liked to be “challenged.”

Conceptualizing power dynamics- ‘Samantha’ agreed with my interpretation on p. 20, and added that she had not conceptualize oppression in terms of power dynamics, until I brought this up in our interviews. She reported that she discussed this with her mother, and they linked this lack of recognition of power, as a message that was perpetuated by popular culture, particularly television. ‘Samantha’ added that most of us get our values from television because we are tired after work and want to sit and relax, and take in the same messages that are repeatedly portrayed, and subsequently perpetuated without thought to the meaning of these values.

Clarifying racial issues- ‘Samantha’ requested clarification about my comments on the bottom of page 22-top of page 23 about African Americans adopting sexualized-denigrated identities without influence or pressure from white people. She commented that she knew she said something like that, adding that she agreed with my interpretation that she did not think that this denigration was adopted out of nowhere.

Wrapping up for the last time- ‘Samantha’ reported that she “really liked” her individualized account. She said that the theories helped to validate thoughts that she had, because she usually felt that she was the only one to see things and felt “crazy.” I commented that I had been concerned that the theories would take away from participants’ narratives, but she assured me that they “added” and clarified things for her. She thanked me for this project because she felt that it helped her to open up a dialogue with her boyfriend about gender role issues and expectations.

I thanked ‘Samantha’ several times and expressed my gratitude for her being an ideal participant because of her reliability and willingness to share her stories. I also informed her of the procedure to acquire the finished dissertation, and reminded her to call me if she had any concerns over the next few weeks.

APPENDIX F

Solicitation Poster

Interested in Gender studies?

Would you like to have a forum to discuss your experiences?

Please contact Erin Danto to discuss possible participation in a study aimed to understand the experiences of women following participation in a gender focused course.

Title of Project:

Connections between gendered constuctions and women's lived experiences in light of feminist awareness: an empirical hermeneutic study.

Purpose:

Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Duquesne University.

Researcher:

Erin Danto
Ph.D. Candidate, Duquesne University

Requirements for participation:

- 1. Identification as a Woman**
- 2. Current/Prior participation in a gender focused course**

What is involved in Participation?

Participation will consist of **one possibly two face to face interviews** at a mutually agreed upon location that will last approximately an hour or two and will be audio-taped. **If you are selected for a second interview, this will ideally take place within a month of the first interview.** All face to face contacts will be followed up with a phone contact with feedback requested. None of the phone contacts will be audio-taped. Keep in mind that it is within your rights to decline participation at any time.

Your interest and participation will be kept confidential. Any information that could be traced back to you or anyone else mentioned will be changed. All original data recordings such as consent forms, audio-tapes, and any other written documentation will be kept in a locked cabinet until the project is completed at which time they will be destroyed.

For those of you who may be interested in participating in this study, Please contact Erin Danto, MA at 609-620-0441 or send email to: danto705@stargate.duq.edu

APPENDIX G

Participant Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title:

Connections between gendered constructions and women's lived experiences in light of feminist awareness: an empirical hermeneutic study

Researcher:

Erin Danto
Ph.D. Candidate, Duquesne University

Advisor:

Dr. Paul Richer
Psychology Department, Duquesne University
(412) 396-5074

Purpose of study:

This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Duquesne University.

Participation:

You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate your experiences in light of your participation in a gender focused course. The research involves participation in one, possibly two face to face interviews that will take place at an agreed upon location and will be audiotaped. The interviews will take place with Erin Danto and will last approximately an hour or two. Following analysis, phone contact will be made to discuss the interview and possibly schedule a second and final face to face interview. The discussion that occurs during the interview(s) will become data to be analyzed. If a second interview takes place, a third and final phone contact will occur so that we can discuss the second interview. Only face to face interviews will be audio-taped.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no greater risks than would occur in any ordinary daily activity. You may benefit from insight gained during discussion of your experiences and by reviewing your interview responses.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you and the interviews will be scheduled at your convenience.

Initials:_____.

Confidentiality:

Your name will never appear on any research instruments. No identifying information about you or any of the people you mention will be released. Though you will be asked to talk about personal experiences, information that could be traced back to you will be changed or deleted from the interview upon transcription.. Original data recordings such as audio-tapes, written materials, and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home until the completion of the project, at which time these materials will be destroyed and none will be shown if/when the project is published.

Right to Withdraw:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

Summary of Results:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you at no cost, upon request.

Voluntary Consent:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. If I have any concerns that I would like to address with the primary researcher, I will contact Erin Danto via mail, telephone, or e-mail at:

Address: 180 Franklin Corner Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
Phone: (609)620-0441
E-Mail: danto705@stargate.duq.edu

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Mr. Eugene Mariani Human Protections Administrator at Duquesne University, (412-396-5081)

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Initials:_____.

APPENDIX H

Complete Five Reading Analyses

Reading for plot, characters, recurrent images, words, metaphors and contradictions.

First Interview with Participant Ann: Reading 1

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

Lines 1-45: Beginning Interview:

I begin the dialogue by informing “Ann” of my intentions to showcase her voice in a way that will be reflective of my feminist stance. I ask Ann if she is willing to commit to meeting once more for another face to face interview and then participate in a review of the final narratives that will occur over the phone (lines 1-10). In lines 12-22, Ann offers identifying characteristics that shed light on labels that have identified Ann such as name, age, occupation & degree, time of participation in gender course, race, and religious orientation. Ann identifies as a 45 year old Italian, social worker who was raised Catholic and now holds a Master’s degree in Social Work, who took a gender focused course sometime between “’74 and ‘79”.

Ann’s first story of gender: oppression experienced as a 12 year old girl:

Ann saw gender as something that influenced “just about every part of life/.../” (line 44). Ann’s first story was her first memory of taking action against being turned down for a job because of being a “girl” (line 49). Ann was twelve years old at the time and decided to call the “Commission” of Civil Rights to lodge a complaint against the pharmacy (lines 51-52). Ann was successful with her complaint, and the Civil Rights Commission sent someone to the pharmacy and was also told that “they were only hiring males” (line 54-55). Ann was offered the job because of this action, but more significantly (perhaps in my eyes) is the idea that Ann received validation for her feeling of injustice.

Ann linked feminism to her mother’s childhood message:

Ann attributed her strong belief in equal rights for women and alignment with feminism to being raised by a “single parent,” her mother, who “was always saying that [she] could do anything” and should “not take anything from anyone” (lines 69-73). Ann noted that “there have been numerous times that gender played a role” in her life and pauses to come up with a particular example.

Two women’s struggle to “do [their] own thing”: (line 134)

Ann talked of her mother’s struggles to live in a way that she wanted, and then moved on to her own difficulties she faced when she tried to become a police officer. Ann depicts her mother’s willingness to take risks by divorcing her father and doing her “own thing” (line 134), working three jobs and raising three children in a time that this was very “stigmatizing” (line 914). Ann describes her mother’s choices as heroic but “not glamorous” (line 131). When asked about her hesitancy, Ann admitted that even though her mother “did pursue her own thing .she also let it destroy her” (lines 145-146). Ann explained that her mother was an alcoholic and died as a result of drinking. (line 138).

After deciding that she was not in shape enough and the field was too male dominated, Ann changed career paths to become a social worker. In that role Ann talked about getting “mentally ready” for what she termed “patronizing” (line 105) behavior

(line 107) that she endured while working with “these guys” (line 107). For example, Ann knew when to “acquiesce at certain times” “even when she knew more about a particular instance/.../” because she “knew it wouldn’t /.../get utilized anyway” (lines 113-117).

Ann in the role of care taker:

Ann minimized the impact that the topic of my study had in her decision to agree to participate. Instead, she said her decision came from her experience doing research and subsequent realization that “people who do research need help” (lines 216-217).

My regret at the end of this interview is that I did not express my admiration for Ann directly. Instead, it seemed that I was bursting at the seams to share my ideas about feminism and gender. My speech becomes befuddled and pace quickened, as I struggled to figure out what was relevant to disclose and what may be too technical or insignificant. In response to Ann’s comment that she had not known what to “imagine” (line 1218), I shared my positive feeling about the “information,” “stories” and “[Ann’s] way of speaking and being so open about things” (lines 1223-1225). I mentioned that I planned to do four readings of the transcript, noted her connection to the movement, history, and labels but did not explain what or why I was doing any of this. I managed to get out my plan to connect theory with life experiences but the rest is too difficult to tease out the points that I was trying to make. Despite this, Ann was supportive throughout my monologues and responded with ‘uh huh’s’ all the way. At the end of all this, I finally attended to Ann’s concerns about not being able to “blend in”(line 1271) and feeling “vulnerable” (1278). I assured her that I planned to change any identifying information that could lead back to her, and added that she would also have the opportunity to make changes (lines 1274-1282). She immediately dismissed her own feelings and said that she was “too old and too tired” “to care what people think” (1286-1289). We ended when Ann had no further questions.

Ann feeling connected:

Ann described her experiences at the women’s center with fondness prior to the splitting off of various groups. She described unity among women, and added that “lesbians were supported and worked with straight women and vice versa everyone had the same issues” (lines 249-251). I am eager to hear more about the center and encourage Ann by prefacing my comments with encouragement “that’s very interesting” and remaining largely silent aside from frequent interruptions of “um hm’s” to show that I want her to continue.

Ann felt “empowered” by her gender course as she learned that “there was a whole force behind all of this” (line 631). Ann talked of the “feminist women” trained to abolish slavery, the paperbacks that she read and a recent television show that documented the letters of Susan B. Anthony to other female friends. Ann’s recollections and recent television choice shows the continued desire to be connected to women’s history while also documenting the difficulties and consequences that befell these women as a result of their activities. Ann noted the splitting that occurred as the feminist women “did two things at the same time” (line 647).

While Ann talked about the loss of intimacy that has occurred in women’s relationships, we were able to commiserate about the experience of being women in a patriarchal society (line 691). When Ann faces a difficult time, as she did when her

mother died, she prefers to seek support from women. Playing basketball provided Ann with the possibility of bonding with “strong women” (lines 775 & 777).

Ann’s overall feeling about the interview seemed positive and she even said that it felt “fun” to talk about these issues. We were able to speak about this further in our phone conversation to set up our second interview. Ann mentioned that following the interview she thought of even more examples of the kinds of things we talked about and I encouraged her to bring this up when we met again.

Ann feeling disconnected:

As Ann spoke about her involvement with the center she “outs” herself (line 237-238) to me because she wants to tell me about a lesbian feminist group that she attended at the women’s center. After outing herself, she talked about it being “great back then...you didn’t even know. Unless someone was identified like in a group like, who was what, like it didn’t even matter” (270-271). I am encouraged by Ann’s willingness to “out” herself because this suggests that she is feeling more comfortable talking openly with me in spite of the fact that Ann feels she needs to preface her identity as lesbian with sarcasm in an effort to presumably make me feel more comfortable. I attempted to show Ann that I noticed this by commenting on her use of the phrase “outing herself” which I connected to the weight of yet another label (lines 256-257).

Despite the fact that there were factions beginning to form in the seventies, Ann clearly stated that things were not as problematic as they are in the present time. I interpreted this statement to mean that she felt less pressure to identify and disclose her sexual orientation in the seventies than she does today because as she explained “people are more into labels” (lines 275-276). Ann initiated the connection between racial identifications that seem to become “more and more separated” (lines 283-288). She also pointed to her own experience with painful labels (lines 283-296) that led to her choice to become a social worker (line 310).

Unlike Ann, I wanted to discuss feminist literature because I was curious to see if Ann has read some of the same authors since we seemed to share a lot of viewpoints. As it turned out, Ann and I did not share experiences many of the same written works. Ann’s list was comprised mostly of political figures active in the National Organization for Women such as Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, and Robin Morgan and Lilly Tomlin. In spite of the fact that Ann did not list any of the feminist post-structuralists I was familiar with, she participated in radical feminist group meetings. She also referenced Robin Morgan, who after I did some research, did indeed turn out to be someone who advocated for a reconceptualization of gendered identities (lines 711-737).

Ann thematized the splits within the feminist movement, and perhaps the split between us. I was focused on non-political feminists, while she began to lightheartedly joke about “lesbians having meetings for meetings sake (750), and lesbians demanding that they be named prior to men to make up for “women hav[ing] always been beneath” (line 746). Ann went on to attribute a difference in power that was once evident in the “gay movement” to the splits evident in the “women’s movement” (line 744). Instead of laughing about this with Ann, I validated the complexity of the issues that necessitated these debates and Ann agreed (lines 753-756). Ann’s use of irony highlights the absurdity of the heat of the debates that occur within the movements (both feminist and “gay”

movements) while the majority of society refuses to acknowledge their existence in the first place.

When speaking about gender difference, Ann and I diverged. Ann talked of men and women “being on different levels or something” (line 805). She acknowledged that the difference between genders was difficult to articulate but stated that there was a “difference” (line 794) whether it has a biological “basis” (line 807) or “just our upbringing...cause its male female from day one” (lines 809-811).

Ann talked of no longer being particularly close to her sisters largely because of the political ideologies or lack thereof (lines 922-929). Again, Ann tried to make light of this with sarcasm. She reported that a large split between she and one of her sisters who identified strongly with Catholicism, came when they continuously argued about abortion, and “everybody was just getting aggravated” (line 934). With a laugh, Ann described the other sister as “white bread” (Line 953). This sister chose a particularly traditional role by getting married and having children at a young age. Ann did not refer to her sisters directly, but reported earlier that her family was not supportive or particularly interested in her life with her partner. Despite this lack of support, Ann was “the one who went with and supported her [sister] through that [mastectomy]” (lines 944-945) and is also the one who calls the other sister to “go for a movie or something” (lines 960-961). Thus, Ann takes on the role of caretaker and agrees to remain silent or at least muted in an effort to maintain a degree of connection with others, or in this particular instance, her sisters. The splits in Ann’s relationships with her sisters mimics splits that she has referenced in the feminist movement, gay and lesbian movement, and in society in general. As splits occur, change becomes impossible when views are silenced, avoided, and disregarded in general.

Markings of marginalization:

I asked Ann to talk about the effects of her sexual orientation because I was interested to see how she incorporated this mark of identification since she has been so articulate and thorough about drawing connections with race and gender. Right away, Ann acknowledged that sexual orientation played a “very big role” (line 430). She went on to say that her sexual orientation has been “something [she] had to be **careful with** too” (line 443), in terms of **employment**, and people assuming that she is straight (lines 445,448). Ann assumes that others will feel “**uncomfortable**” if she does reveal the truth (line455). Ann spoke about her **fears of making “other people uncomfortable**” (line 455) and acknowledged begrudgingly that she was uncomfortable with other’s “disdain” (line 468). She talked about her decision to **remain silent** about her personal life to those whom she is not sure how they may react. She has resigned herself to fact that “[she] can make people know” [without] “actually say[ing] this” (line 470) and accepts that people she is very friendly with, including her own family, (lines492-499) don’t really want to hear about that part of [her] life” (lines 474-475).

I express my empathy for this and encourage Ann to continue to talk about the feelings that she must “deal with” (line 484). As a result of her forced silence and others not asking her to share her personal life, Ann is unable to share “huge parts of her life” (line 487). I feel anger for Ann’s silencing and wanted to help her give voice to this anger by continuing to weave in this part of her life throughout our narrative.

Consequences of marginalization:

Ann talked about the lack of rights connected to Social Security laws and the consequences of not being granted the right to marry and receive social security benefits. (lines 527-558). Ann's partner lives in a different state and she was unable to relocate to this state because of the financial losses that she incurred when she did try. In Ann's words; "that all has to do with our sexual orientation because ya know otherwise we'd e married and ya know" "it wouldn't be an issue" (lines 537-540). Ann tried to make light of her anger and "the hard part" (line 527) of living in a separate state from her partner. She shared her joke that she and her gay male friends should get married to each other to procure each others pensions so that all of their collective money does not go back to the government (1189-1191). I heartily agree that Ann's scheme is a good idea and we both laugh and go on to condemn the government's demand for heterosexual marriage. For Ann and many other people identified with marginalized groups, the marginalization condemns us by not providing legal rights and validation, financial security and by demanding silence.

After talking about being labeled a tomboy, Ann talked about the limits placed on one according to gender like wearing a dress or playing baseball, but not being permitted to choose to do both because in Ann's words, "there had to be a split" (853-859). Despite this, Ann chose to do both of her own volition, identifying as female (calling Civil Rights Commission for gender discrimination) and seeking support of females while also "pursuing the pleasure principle" and playing "army with the boys or hoops" (lines 848-850). Like her mother, Ann suffered many consequences because of it as well.

Instead of expecting support, a theme has emerged where Ann is **"the one" who is left out**. She is the girl who is not hired because of her gender, the tomboy who does not fit into groups as easily as other children who simply adopt the role of girl and play Barbies while the boys play war games. Instead, Ann is the female, the lesbian, the social worker who does things that others can not and will not do, like empathize with marginalized groups (line 107), "prepare herself mentally" to put up with the straight men who disregard her expertise (line 107). When she did speak of supportive relationships she used words like "attached [her]self" (line 981), and "latched on to" (line 985) which suggests that she feels uncertainty about the reciprocity of even these relationships.

Collective Activism or lack thereof:

At one point I asked Ann to connect "gay issues" (line 558) to the women's movement to gauge her opinion about support lent. Ann believed that the women's movement has lent some support but pointed to the willingness of the "gay and lesbian movement" to "basically" accept and "include" (line 569) bisexuality as a united whole rather than splitting people into separate groups as the women's movement has done. Ann distanced herself from alignment with the women's movement when she spoke of the lack of efforts it has made to push for "gay issues" (line 576). She referred to it as "they" as she went on to list the agenda of getting "adequate childcare" (line 587). Again, Ann pointed to the problems inherent to dichotomizing groups of people and the lack of change that results.

She and I reflected on my use of the term "gay issues" and I, though not explicitly, linked this to the splitting problem and my own difficulty moving out of discourse that marginalizes even though this is the focus of the project (lines 574-579). I

do not make this link explicit until later when I mention that “gender studies always automatically assumes women” (line 603).

Despite, or possibly as a result of her lack of steadfast support, Ann agreed that “it is important to put ourselves out there/.../” (lines 995-996) because it “empowers people...I think....whether you realize it or not” (line 1011). She said that “[she’s] found support when [she] needed it” (line 992). Ann’s willingness to support others was clear. We spoke of her willingness to participate in this project (line 217), and activism with feminist and gay and lesbian political groups (lines 52, 249-251, 734,). As a social worker, Ann has facilitated adoption, worked in a welfare office, and acts as a clinician with her current population (lines 179-180, & 999). As previously noted, her efforts to maintain relationships with her sisters and nieces showed her dedication to maintaining familial and role model relationships with those she cares about (lines 944-945 & 960-961&1005).

After Ann directly asserts herself as a feminist with a strong, no explanation, “yeah” (line 1105), we review issues we have touched on throughout the interview and the ambivalent feelings are showcased. We discuss the overlap of race, civil rights factions, and hierarchical constructions, and the consequent loss of intimate connections among women, collective community actions, change, and ultimately hope (lines 1106-1212). Ann completes this review with a return to domestic partnership laws. Ann ultimately expresses hope that “Yeah, if it ever happens [domestic partnerships are granted right to marry regardless of sexual identification]” she and her partner will have a registered partnership to show and say “See! Here it is!” (line 1185).

Cultural direction: backwards, forwards, and in between:

Ann attributed the lack of change since the seventies to the increasing splits and labels among people along gender lines. She told of her hope while in the gender focused course and explained that despite feeling that “it was a long way to go to get equal rights,” “it seemed like things were possible”(lines 314-317). She referenced the continued debate about the Roe v. Wade case and stated “they’ve been trying to reverse that!” (lines 315-323). Ann is highlighting the Roe V. Wade case, and later referenced the debates and stigma related to abortion rights advocates, as a sign that society (including Ann’s family) is stuck, possibly fixated from this point forward (lines 402-405, and again in lines 937-938).

I am somewhat surprised by Ann’s positive recollections of change and sense that things have gone backwards even though I have argued this point throughout my literature review. Ann’s descriptions have helped me to recognize clear signs, such as her example or Roe v. Wade, that help locate points where we as a society do indeed seem to be stuck.

Ann then goes on to list reasons why she does not believe that things will change for the better in “[her] lifetime]” (line 481). She began by voicing hopelessness about women and men “recognizing that “there are different roles or different strengths for both sexes” (lines 331-332). She also attributed the lack of identification with feminism, women actually making excuses about identifying as feminist (391) and generally experiencing feminism as a “dirty word” (line 395) because feminists are associated with issues of abortion, lesbianism, taking jobs (409). She referenced the paucity of women in “administrative positions” as compared to men and (line 347), “women turning on

themselves to some extent” (line 376) and agreed that the general energy around these issues seemed down (lines 373-375).

Ann expressed anger and hopelessness about things changing in gay rights. She referenced her family’s attitude, or don’t ask don’t tell policy, and said “if its like that with you family” (line 499), “then [how do you expect] the rest of society to along” (line 503). She went on to talk about the actions she has taken to participate in collective actions (lines 506-522). She acknowledges that she has been less active marching in gay pride parades and group meetings since the 1970’s (line 516, & 518-9).

Ann carefully mapped changes in athletic activities to serve as signposts of change and lack of change throughout her life. Ann’s pursuit of basketball in high school is markedly different from being labeled a tomboy who did not fit in with other females and inevitably lost friends who no longer played sports (lines 830-860 & 864-883). Ann’s ambivalent belief in progress and advancement of feminist agenda showed when she said “ ya know in a lotta ways I see things going backwards but in a lotta ways ya know there’s like ya know, like little kids, little females playing soccer now” (lines 1038-1039). This stands out in contrast to Ann’s experience of having a female designated pool table at the community center, where “girls rules” were assigned to the female basketball games (line 1041-1056). Ann acknowledged that women’s sports forums are “still separate” (line 1100) and “still limited” (line 1103) but exist with less controversy than when she was a child.

As I peruse this transcript again, I am aware that I often shifted topics away from her despair or feeling of anger towards the women’s movement and towards society in general. I move away from her utterances about things going “backwards” (line 1014), which may have led to her expressing ambivalence about where we are going as a society. Towards the end of the interview Ann voiced the idea that “we need a whole global perspective on it” as she spoke about the lack of change she saw as her niece automatically stayed home with her children instead of her husband who had less earning potential (lines 1062-1077). This seems to be a shift in Ann’s perspective since she was hesitant in the beginning of the interview to shift focus away from personal or internal troubles within the political movements referenced. As such I am wondering if her perspective changed as she reviewed her experiences. I will explore this issue in subsequent readings and follow up with Ann as well.

Reading for the voice of I, Looking for ways in which “Ann” and I speak about and experience our selves.

First Interview with Participant Ann: Reading 2.

Key: Bold script is used to highlight key points about the ways that Ann and I spoke and felt about ourselves.

Setting up interview:

I acted as director of the interview, the researcher. “if I come up with more questions about that [identifying information] I guess I’ll come back to it” (lines 40-42). Ann identified as a 45 year old social worker, who saw herself as Caucasian and Italian, old, and a non-practicing spiritual person who was raised Catholic (lines 26-39).” Ann saw gender as something that “this would be just about every part of life/.../” (lines 41-42).

Ann as participant, began the interview as someone who is forgetful “I’m drawing a blank of course”, while I as researcher began as the person in charge (lines 44-45).

First story: Ann’s first political act.

Ann recalled being turned down for a job at the age of twelve because she was “a girl” (lines 47-49). Ann was a young girl who called the Civil Rights Commission to report the injustice and was successful in getting a response from the Commission, and in being offered the job in the end. **Ann was nonchalant about her activism at a young age but later referred back to this experience as a point of reference for the beginning of her activism (line 67).**

I said “wow” and refer back to Ann’s age to show that this stands out to me (lines 57-59). I am more impressed with Ann’s willingness to take action against gender oppression than she seemed to be. I am also envious of her willingness to take action and wished that I had similar stories of connection with the feminist movement.

Gender as a mark of oppression:

Ann initiated discussion of “numerous times” when gender played a role in her life (line 86). **Ann’s willingness to take more of a lead suggests that she experienced herself as someone whose gender had been an issue and was ready and willing to talk about this.**

I listened and acted as witness who subsequently encouraged her disclosure of narratives of oppression. My responses remained “um hm’s” which I quickly offered whenever she paused because I was eager to affirm her experience and show my respect for her actions and beliefs.

Gender roles through time:

My role as listener changed when I asked Ann to link her experience back to her mother.

Ann’s uses the words, “voluntarily” and “not glamorous” and “sad” to describe her mother and her own childhood. While Ann gave her mother credit for making a decision

to change her life according to her own she is also in touch with **the sadness and difficulties that both she and her mother faced as women in a time when divorce and employment was not favored or accepted.**

Ann was influenced “unconsciously” by gender when choosing a career. (lines 163-167). Ann experiences herself as someone who has been disrespected and assumed to be something she is not. Ann is angry when put in this role but also feels she must “acquiesce” at times (line 113). **I encouraged Ann to continue to talk about her feelings of being demeaned because I want to understand how this may or may not with my theories. I again adopted roles of witness and supporter. I experienced Ann as someone with “strong “ (line 202) feminist alignment and Ann agrees with this.**

Changes in the feminist movement and society:

Ann used to feel more connected to the feminist movement when she was in college. Ann is ambivalent about the direction of change in society since she still feels she is “pooh poohed” by others, and has lost hope that things will change for the better.

When Ann was involved with the women’s center in college, she felt much more connected, hopeful, and supported by others (lines 207-210).

I brought up my study as a reconnecting point because I assumed that Ann wanted to participate because she wanted to connect with someone who shared her feminist alignment. Ann dismissed this and instead claimed that she wanted to help because she empathized with researchers. I felt supported but surprised that Ann did not seek a connection based on ideology.

Ann outside:

Ann as **historian, (lines 234) lesbian, “Outing herself” (lines 237-238).** Ann begins to share more of herself. Ann differentiated herself she must be “out.”

Ann also spoke of things being better when “it didn’t matter until someone was identified” (lines 270-271). I highlighted Ann’s language. I want to show Ann that this disclosure is not going to be left outside, unspeakable (lines 243, & 257).

I am the one who calls attention to this being another label and become the bearer of the problems with splitting. I am taking up Ann’s theory.

Skin color:

Ann experienced herself as oppressed and verbally abused because of the color of her skin. Ann as a “**Puerto Rican nigger**” even though she is Caucasian (line 293).

Ann was someone who empathized with others.

Ann is aware of issues that others dismiss.

Ann makes use of her difficult experience, drawing from them to do her job better and in an effort to help others.

Changing culture?

Ann is ambivalent about changes in our culture being positive. Ann is not ambivalent when she said several times that we are not where we should be (lines 325, & 341). Ann no longer experiences the sense of hope that she “once had” (line 317). **Ann is disappointed.**

I listened and occasionally offered statements to summarize or clarify Ann's disclosures. I am a researcher whose participant is doing most of the work for me, drawing connections without much if any help (lines 314-347).

Feminism and apathy:

Ann is angry with women who do not affirm feminist beliefs and in effect "turn on ourselves" (line 376).

Ann is angry and tired of seeing splits among people who used to offer support.

Carefully avoiding disdain:

Ann continues to feel the need be careful as a woman and a lesbian in jobs and social arenas (lines 445-448). Ann is careful not to make others feel uncomfortable. Ann accepts this role, but agreed that this "stinks" (line 479).

Ann is apologetic about her "discomfort for others disdain" (line 468).

Ann sounded disempowered, remains quiet.

Ann sounded apathetic, accepting of consequences for being seen as different.

Dismissal and silence:

Ann is used to being dismissed by family (493). Ann's personal life is sanctioned as unimportant. I encouraged Ann to speak about her partner, and personal experiences. I validated and showed support because I want to show Ann that I am different. Ann feeling disconnected from partner, formal political groups, and family.

Ann feeling controlled by those who refuse to recognize her life.

Language as a means of marginalization:

I called attention to my use of the term "gay issues." **I am modeling reflection on terms and instances when we recognize our place caught up in the system that we critique.** I experienced discomfort with terminology because the labeling of "gay" issues suggested that I view these issues as different or separate in some way from human rights in general (line 578).

Ann connected and validated by women's movement at time of gender studies course (line 629). Ann experienced self as old, and as a historian. Ann in role of teacher, while I am in role of student, listener, and witness. Ann performed, and I have received.

Strong women:

Ann as always connected to "strong women" (line 777). Ann is disconnected from men in some indefinable way (lines 786, 788, 790, 794, 799, 801, & 802). **I participated more when Ann struggled to define gender differences.**

Ann as an outsider, a care-taker, and a role model:

Ann was a tomboy, someone who did not fit in. Ann knew what she liked to do and did it. **Ann was limited by feeling pressure to choose gendered identity.**

Ann was unsure how to make sense of gender as a role that dictates actions.

Ann learned how to play the gender game later than others.

Caught in our hierarchical system:

I reflected on being caught up in system of patriarchy when I correct my use of the term “guys” to refer to Ann and her sisters. **Ann is also someone who thinks about her place in the culture and where our culture is heading.** Ann took for granted how strongly she felt about gender and other marginalized roles influence in her life (line 1083).

Growing awareness and sense of self as feminist:

Ann felt more aware the more she talked (line 1083).

Ann remains active even though she expressed ambivalence about the direction of society (line 1175).

Both Ann and I felt good about interview (lines 1085 &1223).

Reflections of a participant: vulnerability.

Ann expressed vulnerability. (line 1278). Ann will not able to “blend in,” because of the few number of participants (line 1271). I expressed my views in rambling fashion, I feel free to tell Ann more about my views (lines 1223-1231, & 1240-1243). Ann described her disclosure as “spewing” (line 1220-1222). Ann felt connected but old (lines 1085, 1091, & 1286)

Reading for process of interaction between Ann and I.

First Interview with Participant Ann: Reading 3.

Key: Bold script used to highlight main issues.

Beginning Interview:

We began interview with me clearly taking the lead and being directive about questions, gathering information with the assumption that Ann should offer this (lines 34-37).

*Ann was hesitant when asked about race and religion. She explained this hesitancy to me later on when she talked of being called a “Puerto Rican nigger” and the pain and empathy she experienced for others facing these prejudices (lines 293). Ann also told me that she no longer practiced Catholicism because of “ideological difficulties” (line 35).

Shift to focus of project, which also meant a shift in Ann taking more of a lead.

As I shift from identifying information questions, I also begin to mutter, repeating myself in line 40, saying “ok” three times. This suggests I am feeling uncomfortable or perhaps unsure where things will lead. I remained silent when Ann answered my question about gender influencing her life. Ann answered broadly saying that it influenced “just about every part of life”, and then “drew a blank” (lines 44-45). My silence allowed, and perhaps pressured Ann to take the lead. Ann did just that and the first story was shared.

First story of gender being at issue: Ann’s experience of being turned down for a job because of gender and taking action.

As Ann told this story I was amazed that such a young girl would follow through with her conviction that something was unjust about being judged because of her gender. I was also amazed that she knew how and who to contact to get some sort of reaction to the injustice. I showed this reaction by repeating her age several times and referring to this example throughout the interview to highlight her early identification as a person who was willing to take issue with civil rights violations. Ann did not show any signs that she thought of her actions at age twelve as extraordinary. Only later did she begin to reference her actions at the age of twelve to contextualize points on her own (line 438).

Changes in turn taking style: As Ann and I continued to talk, Ann initiated topics without direction, and I sat back offering “um hm’s” to express encouragement and at times validation. I also used reiteration and affirmative statements like “wow” (line 50), to encourage Ann to continue to lead. As we talked, Ann and I also began to talk in an overlapping style, with frequent interruptions to say “um hm” to acknowledge and validate each other. Soon after Ann shared her first story, she began to follow her statements with “ya know” (line 105+) These statements continued throughout our interview and suggested a feeling of shared context and understanding.

Ann highlighted contradiction between mother's message of no limitations with the limitations that both she and her mother have experienced:

Ann shared her mother's message that she "could do anything" and "not to take anything from anyone" (lines 69-73). In contrast to this message Ann talked about the pain and suffering of her mother as she left her husband "voluntarily" and set off to work three jobs "when functioning" (lines 122-146). The "sad" side of this story was that Ann's mother "let it destroy her" and she ultimately died from alcoholism (lines 138 & 146). These examples highlighted the contradiction between Ann's mother's encouragement and the consequences that befell her when made choices that society deemed inappropriate.

Without prompting, Ann went on to talk about her years working with law enforcement officers and being seen as weak. This was evident in the way the officers waited for the "ladies to leave the room" before talking about a particular case (line 98). Ann initially made light of this situation and joked that she could "get lunch out of them" (line 103). Even though she did not state explicitly that she used gender to her advantage, it was clear that Ann was referencing traditional gender role expectations that men pay for women when dining out. We both laughed at her joke because we both related to this experience. Through her use of sarcasm, Ann showcased the irony inherent within the small benefits of subscribing to traditional gender roles such as getting a free lunch, and the psychological pain that arose because of enforcement of these differences. Ann's sarcastic tone suggested that Ann did not really endorse the exploitation of these stereotypes but instead recognized the issues that arose in common interactions. Ann juxtaposed the contradiction between her beliefs and actions in this particular instance.

Ann's attempts to live with gender oppression:

Ann talked about acquiescing and being quiet as a "kind of an acceptance/.../[of] the way it is" (line 120) but was sure to add that this acceptance "doesn't make it right" (lines 120-122). At this point, I shifted our attention from the way things are to Ann's mother and her endorsement of Ann as capable of "anything."

Ann became quiet after she talked of her mother's death and I shifted to the topic of Ann's career choice. I did not want to force Ann to discuss something that made her uncomfortable and her hesitance to talk about her mother was in sharp contrast to her willingness to talk about other topics. Ann responded to my shift in topics and talked about her career choice.

She recalled her decision to move away from law enforcement, despite majoring in criminal justice in undergraduate college. Ann attributed her decision to change career paths to the fact that she "wasn't really in shape enough to do that" (lines 156-158). Ann attributed her failure of this goal to herself and only passively made reference police being male dominated (line 155).

We went on to talk about the "demeaning" (167-168) element of social work that remains and how this contrasted with her experience as an undergraduate who participated in the women's study center in college. In Ann's words, [things seem to have] "gotten a little bit better/.../I guess/.../ better than what it was when I started out" (188-189). However, Ann contradicted this statement when she reflected on a time when she did not feel so demeaned in the past. In the 1970's Ann had a place to go to for a "warm supportive atmosphere" (lines 205-210) that is not there "anymore" (212).

Interview process: repetitive theme of age emerged for Ann.

Ann made reference to age several times throughout the interview but I never took this up in terms of our parallel process. At the time of our interaction, Ann was 45 years old and I was 29. Ann commented that she took the gender course “a long time ago” (line 26), and said she “felt old” as she recalled experiences throughout the interview (line 1091). At the end of the interview, Ann dismissed concerns about her own vulnerability because she said she was “too old and too tired” to care what people thought. Ann also mentioned at the beginning of the interview that she assumed I would prefer to meet with people who participated in a gender-focused class more recently (line 205). Ann’s indirect repetition of age themes may have signified that she was curious about our age difference, or she may have been feeling older as she talked of time passing. In any case it seemed to be her way of saying that this was an issue of importance to her, while I ignored it.

Coming Out:

Ann “outs” herself (lines 237-238) which suggested that she felt she was taking a risk in our meeting. By using this terminology, and sarcasm, Ann slowly identified herself with another mark of prejudice. Ann labeled this as a risk directly when she called attention to the admission and termed it “outing herself” (lines 237-238) and indirectly referred to feminists (possibly referencing me) whom she has experienced as “more split off these days” (lines 247-250). She also talked of her fear of making others uncomfortable and her strategy to avoid this is to keep her sexual identity out of conversation (lines 454-475).

Moving closer: catching site of interview process.

As Ann revealed more about herself, and took initiative to link experiences of gender, race, and sexual orientation, I became more empathic and disclosive with my comments. I used tone and emphasis to show Ann where I stood (from line 289 on). I told Ann that I perceived her narratives as evidence for marginalization and oppression (line 302). I even picked up Ann’s phrase “ya know” (line 311).

When Ann and I talked of shared contexts, such as gender discrimination in occupational settings, I became less active though still responded with “um hm’s” and we even completed each other’s sentences (lines 328-372). For example:

- Line
- III. PA: Like even in social work except that there’s more women in administration than there used to be but.//
 - IV. R: But!//
 - V. PA: But even so.
 - VI. R: And you’re aware of it?//

Influence of sexual identification: in and out of the interview.

Following this exchange, I asked about the influence of Ann’s sexual orientation. Perhaps I felt more comfortable being direct about this question because of our shared understanding that was demonstrated in the previous discussion. Just as Ann explained that she had to “be careful” about talking about her sexual orientation in work contexts, and family settings, she was careful discussing this with me (line 443). Ann only began to

talk about this at length in terms of family, working with police and generally feeling “different” after I asked direct questions (lines 446, 499, 455). Within these utterances, Ann referred to her life with her partner as “that part of her life” and became apologetic about not making others uncomfortable. She pointed to “outing herself” within the interview to show that she was aware of the risk (line 455, 475). I did not want to be part of the groups that did not want to hear about Ann’s life, and so I encouraged Ann to talk more about her life with her partner. I was also explicit about my shared outrage that Ann often felt pressure to silence herself (line 484, 487, & 494). We also shared our disdain for the women’s movement’s lack of advocacy and support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues (though we do not use term LGBT) when we both distanced ourselves from the movement by referring to it as “they” (Ann lines 564,571,576 & Erin lines 559-560, & 578-579).

I also put my use of the term “gay issues” up for question because I was aware of my own discomfort with this statement because it marginalized Ann. I also felt unsure how to make reference to issues particularly focused on sexual orientation because Ann never used the “LGBT” term and I did not want to introduce this for fear of forcing Ann to adopt this terminology (line 578-579).

Empowered participant: Richer account of gendered experience.

Ann explicitly stated that she felt empowered by participating in her gender focused course because “it helped her see that there was a whole force behind all of this and I was where I was at because of all that had happened before me” (lines 631-634). Ann also felt comfortable avoiding my question about books she read and instead talked of a television show that highlighted change in intimacy amongst women (lines 660-661). This move suggested that Ann felt free to talk about topics that she felt more strongly about. She spoke of loss of intimacy between women as highlighted by a television show she recently watched. Just as she was longing for intimacy that has been lost to women historically, she did not feel the need to silence herself or defer to people who had more power, as I did as the researcher. Instead, she felt empowered to tell me what meant more to her in that moment instead of answering my question. Looking back, I am glad that Ann felt empowered enough to take the lead, and as a result highlighted an important issue that I did not anticipate.

Internalized shame: consequences of not abiding by traditional standards.

Ann accepted it was one thing “not to like them (gay and lesbian people)” but was upset that even the gay movement “got that way for a while” and essentially turned on themselves (lines 741-742). Ann subtly accepted that straight people are able to dislike or disregard people who identify as lesbian and gay but lesbian and gay individuals did not have this right. This suggested that Ann internalized shame prescribed by the dominant heterosexualized discourse. I indirectly referred to the pressures of our current patriarchal and “heterosexualized” culture when we were speaking about the hesitancy of the women’s movement to advocate for issues outside of childcare (line 590). Neither of us, however, explored this further.

Researcher as director:

I shifted the conversation away from factions within the LGBT movement back to Ann's gender course, following a break caused by my need to flip the tape (lines 762-763). Again at process level, I shaped the direction of the interview by moving away from psychological insights such as Ann's acceptance of people's prejudice, and shifted back to gender issues related to feminism (lines 741-742). Within this shift, Ann as a politically active, aware, feminist beginning at the age of twelve emerged more clearly. Ann reminisced about times when she felt more connected to the women's movement when she called in the Commission and then later participated in a women's center (lines 762-763 & 765).

At one point in the interview Ann feared that she was getting off track as she reminisced about her childhood (line 1058). I discouraged Ann's worries by saying "not at all" three times (line 1059). This encouraged Ann to continue, since she immediately went on to voice the lack of change she has witnessed as her niece "automatically took that role (leaving outside occupation to care for child)" (line 1069). Ann's concern about staying "on track" for my sake and her discomfort focusing on herself, showed that she was often more focused on caring for others than for herself. Shortly after this exchange, after I invoked "wrapping up" the interview (line 1078) Ann reported that she "never realized how opinionated she was" and said that "it [was] fun" to talk about and think about the issues that we discussed (lines 1080-1089). I hope that my encouragement and validation to speak about her experiences helped her to reflect on her own accomplishments and steadfast work to change oppressive dynamics.

Validation provides room for feelings and self- reflection in research.

As I became more direct about validating Ann's experiences of oppression, she became less dismissive of her feelings about being labeled "different" (line 463), as "tomboy" (line 833), as child of divorce (lines 906), as "the darkest thing they had ever seen" (line 288). Ann and I both become increasingly sarcastic. This seemed to help Ann talk more openly about more vulnerable feelings of being stigmatized. Ann revealed her experience of being a child of divorced parents at a time when this was scandalous. This stigma even resulted in loss of friends for Ann's sister (lines 911-912). Ann termed her childhood as something that she and her sister's "survived" (lines 924).

Ann referenced me indirectly when she sarcastically commented that she was "again taking a supportive role" when she spoke of supporting her sister's battle with cancer. This suggested that Ann's view of herself changed, as she became more reflective about herself and her life. Even though Ann initially claimed that she "forgot all about" her activism at the age of twelve (line 81), she referenced this example in a later part of the interview to signify her early development of feminist ideology (line 438). Ann also thought about her joke that she could "get lunch out of" the male police officers, (first mentioned in line 103) and referenced this example again when she talked of the reasons why gender roles remained unchanged (line 334). Indirectly, Ann pointed out that the small benefits of gender identity in a dichotomized construction kept people from recognizing the damages.

Cultural Movement: moving forwards and backwards.

Ann and I both referred to ourselves as part of the women's movement. We used words like "we" (line 995+) and Ann mentioned the importance of "putting yourself out there" (line 1004) particularly when referring to collective action and role modeling. Ambivalence about change remained however, as Ann moved between the idea that culture was going "not backwards but being covered up" (lines 1014- 1016), and the idea that girls of the next generation are playing soccer (line 1039). The problem as Ann saw it, was the fact that these same girls will also face the assumption and pressures of society that women should raise children and not receive the same compensation for this choice as other choices would offer (line 1020 & 1069).

Wrapping up: parallel process.

Ann and I thematized the history of the women's movement and splits that Ann attributed to the lack of progress to date as we also prepared to end our meeting. Prior to the end, I asked more personal questions about Ann's partner and in effect attempted to increase our intimacy. Ann did the same, and was willing to share her anger about having to be apart for financial reasons "just because [she] doesn't have a penis next to [her]" (line 1208). No sooner did Ann describe her speech as "spewing" did I go on to spew in a long monologue about my ideas about feminism and the project itself (lines 1220 & 1223-1231). When asked about follow up questions or concerns about the project, Ann was willing to share that she felt vulnerable about being one of a small number of participants (line 1278). This admission by Ann of vulnerability and subsequent dismissal of these same concerns after I reassured her that she would be able to make changes, suggested to me that she felt comfortable with me, and perhaps connected to the project.

Reading for references to larger cultural contexts, including but not limited to connection and disconnection from feminist post-structural accounts.

First Interview with Participant Ann: Reading 4.

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

I. Power dynamics within project.

I designed this project with the goal of disrupting patriarchal power structures and designing a methodology that fit with my feminist post-structural ideology. I wanted to showcase the connection between feminist post-structural theory and women's lived experiences, and do so in a way that did not perpetrate the same hierarchical damage that silenced the voice of participants. I told the participants about my feminist perspective and explained that this would influence the interpretations made about their accounts. I did this in an effort to let the participants in on my perspective, and the basis of the research. I also explained that the second interview was an opportunity for them to give feedback, correct, and/or censor their disclosures during the interview. I started with this issue in the case of Ann's account because Ann admitted at the end of our interview that she felt vulnerable in her role as a participant. This is an important context from which to interpret the rest of our interaction as it emerged. As well as being a place to begin commentary about the connection between Ann's lived experience in a one-down position within this very project, in spite of my attempts to disrupt (not hide or eradicate) traditional power dynamics between the researcher and the researched.

II. Categorization and consequences of labels

Once taping began during the first interview, I asked Ann to identify herself according to name, age, job, degree, college, race and ethnicity, and religion. All of these categories as taken up in our culture serve to differentiate and define one group of people from another group of people. (lines 12-40). By asking these questions I validated the importance of this differentiation, while not questioning or giving voice to gender identification or sexual orientation. This was done out of protocol, as these identifiers are assumed to be identifiable, and without need for discussion.

Despite this, I have attempted to integrate the overlapping layers of marginalization throughout the analysis instead of focusing solely on gender oppression. I have done this in an attempt to preserve the complexity and plurality of Ann's experience. This was also done in keeping with feminist post-structural theory. Ann's experience of herself as gendered overlapped with race, culture, sexual orientation, and historical links to other women and marginalized groups. Each identifier of marginalization was marked by characteristics that are differentiated from white, heterosexual males.

Ann offered several examples of being marginalized because of these identifiers or categorizations.

Gender-Ann was denied a job because she was a girl (line 49) suffered through patronizing work environments and her insights were not utilized because of her gender

(lines 107 & 117). Ann's mother "let it destroy her" when she turned to alcoholism as a way to cope with the difficulties she faced as a divorced, mother (lines 145-146).

Race- Ann talked of having "issues with race" because even though she "always" identified as Caucasian, those around her marginalized her because she was "the darkest thing they ever saw" (line 288).

Religion/ Feminism- Ann and sister are not close because of ideological differences in spiritual beliefs that provoke continuous arguments (lines 928-929)

Sexual Orientation- Ann talked throughout the interview about the imposed silence or need to "be careful" (line 443), "leave this part out" of discourse, for fear of making others uncomfortable" (lines 445-448). Distance from family due to lack of intimacy caused by lack of willingness to discuss differences in identities. Ann was also forced to live in different state from partner because they are denied social security benefits because she does not "have a penis next to [her]" (line 1208).

III. Apathy or hopelessness

Despite Ann's strong identity as a feminist and an activist for civil rights, she maintained an apathetic stance when we talked about change.

Need to get by: Ann commented throughout the interview that she did not foresee change in her lifetime. She highlighted the pressure she felt internally to "acquiesce" because her insights "would not get utilized anyway" (line 117).

Things getting worse with loss of collective action. She talked of things feeling "more possible" (line 317), when women's movement was active in the 1970's. She went on to say things would "never be equal" (line 328). Ann remained active in political activities and events "once in a while" but said there are no formal group meetings or anything "like that anymore" (line 519). Ann and I also distanced ourselves from the feminist movement and began to refer to it as "they" when we talked about the lack of activity and change specifically with LGBT and racial issues (lines 559, 585, 587, 589). We were aligned with the feminist movement when we each referenced our beliefs about what should be done on an individual basis like that of role modeling (line 995).

Hopelessness about future changes in child-care. When talking about child-care, Ann stated that "its never gonna be seen as who should go" (line 363), instead she went on to say that women continue to assume this role without question.

Hopelessness about change in acceptance of sexual orientations that differ from heterosexual configurations. She also stated on a few occasions that sexual orientation other than heterosexuality will never gain widespread acceptance or acknowledgement "in [her] lifetime" (line 481).

Stigma and lack of respect for women's issues keeps men out of gender focused courses. Ann and I discussed the preconception that gender studies is a term that is synonymous with women's studies (lines 597-605). She believed that "men aren't gonna sign up for a [gender studies course] because of the stigma" (lines 607-609). Ann

did say that “some changes” have taken place (line 1093), but agreed with me that the changes are “still limited” (line 1103).

IV. Patriarchy and the Consequences:

Throughout the interview, Ann talked of experiencing oppression by virtue of being marked as woman, and therefore less than men. Within this dichotomy, those who have power have the ability to silence and therefore oppress those who do not.

Consequences:

Ann linked the story of her **mother** who “tried to do her own thing” through divorce and employment, and childcare eventually **succumbed to alcoholism**. Ann attributed the pressure of her mother’s place within society as the element that her mother “let destroy her” (line 146). Ann did not let her dreams of doing what she wanted destroy her, but she did have to **change her career path**. Instead of helping people by becoming a police officer, Ann chose social work because law enforcement was “male oriented” and required a “good enough shape” that Ann felt she did not meet at the time (lines 155-159). Ann reported that her nieces have continued to succumb to gender pressures when they have “**automatically**” **adopted the care-taking role** for their children. Ann reported that little to no consideration was given to their husbands’ ability to do this, and the fact that they may have more earning potential than their husbands (lines 1069-1072).

Ann talked of instances when her mark of gender precipitated **being “let out of the room”** while male police officers conducted investigations that she needed to be a part (line 98). She may have “gotten lunch out of them” but she also knew her place (line 103). She knew when to acquiesce and keep her mouth shut in an effort to show that she knew “how it [was]” (lines 113-120). As such, Ann’s place within this structure was founded as less than by her male colleagues. Ann was differentiated by virtue of what she was not allowed to take part in because she is a woman. This difference was reinforced by the lack of respect she was shown. This also hearkens back to **Lacan’s formulation of gender differences that male subjectivity is founded upon the negation of women’s subjectivity**.

Ann believed that **Social Work** was looked down upon and “demeaned” by virtue of the fact that it is predominantly taken up by women (lines 167-169). She reported that this tends to play out even when men pursue social work because female social workers are expected to inspect homes for cleanliness and male presence, while male social workers tend toward administrative roles (lines 180-186). Ann agreed that the female administrators continue to stand out since this is not the norm (lines 347-358).

Silence of sexual orientation and Silence to racial minorities (lines 585, 587, 589, 559).

V. Identity defined in relation to male relationships: connection to Levi-Strauss & Lacan.

When Ann discussed her experience as a “**tomboy**” it reminded me of Levi-Strauss’s claim that biology defined women by virtue of their roles in society. This makes sense within the context of Levi-Strauss’s exchange theory in which men are the primary “mediators of the exchange process” while femaleness is the “necessary

designation for those who are to be exchanged (1969, p. 480). Levi-Strauss wrote “it is only from a biological, certainly not a social point of view that motherhood, sisterhood, or daughterhood are properties of the individuals considered” (p. 482). Rubin (1997) asserted that Levi-Strauss “constructed an implicit theory of sexual oppression” (p. 35). According to Rubin, women were denied subjectivity, and were therefore denied the right to speak in order to prevent a disruption in the system of exchange (p. 38).

For Ann, the mark of tomboy was negative because it signified that she was not “somebody’s son or a girl but you’re a tomboy” (line 840). Ann initially dismissed feelings about this but admitted that there “was supposed to be [shame]” attached to this label but she did not let this stop her (line 842). However, Ann went on to say that she was unable to “wear a dress too and play baseball” without the stigma of not fitting into either label (line 855). As a result of not fitting within the exchange system, Ann was often left by those who did ascribe to their designated roles (lines 861-892). Within this conceptualization, Ann was not exchanged and often did not retain value within the dichotomized gender culture.

Ann did however, conceptualized herself as someone who fit into typical gender designation categories while others did not. In accordance with Lacan’s theory, Ann was conceptualized by those around her, as someone who did not assimilate particularly masculine or feminine traits and was therefore designated as “tomboy” neither masculine or feminine. Because most of Ann’s subsequent identifications were filtered through her mark as tomboy, Ann’s identity continuously felt at issue when she was forced to choose between the two intelligible genders that are recognized by the rest of society. As a result, Ann was not able to wear a dress as she noted and then play baseball with the same ease as someone who was perceived as primarily feminine or masculine. Instead, as she alluded to, these choices carried a lot more weight.

The function of limit setting, or in Lacan’s terms the “paternal function,” was taken up by others around Ann who contradicted her mother’s message that she could “do anything” (line 71). The others in Ann’s life continuously imposed limits on her abilities when she was denied a job because of gender, denied voice by men in her field, and even denied friendship when Ann did not participate in activities deemed appropriate for females. In addition to providing evidence for Lacan’s theory of the paternal function, Ann’s story also shows that limits related to gender designation can be posed as detrimental and unnecessary. Ann experienced gender prescriptions as thwarting but was willing to make choices that went against traditional values and still achieve sanity. Ann also internalized her own set of limits that has enabled her to live a productive and meaningful life, while also facing unnecessary consequences such as living in another state from her partner and feeling the need to silence herself even though she has a lot to offer.

VI. Gendered identity attained through loss: Butler’s conceptualization of gendered identity through melancholia.

Ann’s stories of gendered identity were marked by loss from childhood through to adulthood. Though Butler (1997) made no empirical claims, I would like to pose my dialogue with Ann as evidence for gender identification through generalized melancholia. Throughout our dialogue, Ann and I referenced loss and sacrifice when we spoke about gender identity, race, and sexual orientation. Ann and I agreed that “society as a whole”

kept “splitting and splitting, and spitting” (line 1147). We spoke of lost opportunities for women and girls, loss of validation for Ann’s choices to pursue activities of her own accord, loss of friends and family ties, and loss of intimacy among women and men.

Ann’s dialogue went beyond Butler’s discussion of loss and gender identity because she was able to articulate actual losses that she had experienced as a result of her homosexual identification. Ann experienced the loss of homosexual and heterosexual attachments. She did not, however, receive acknowledgement for these losses and subsequent grief from others. Instead, she was expected to acquiesce and accept the losses as consequences for deviating from compulsory heterosexuality. Ann’s grief was named by her, and suffered alone. Ann’s strong endorsement of Butler seemed to be more about the acknowledgement or validation of her losses that Butler provided, and less about the actual specificity of Butler’s argument.

Marks- Tomboy (line 831). Ann was labeled a “tomboy” because she “knew what [she] liked to do” and “didn’t let (gendered prescriptions) stop [her]” (lines 842-850). Despite this claim, Ann admitted that she felt shame and felt she often had to choose one gender prescription over another, therefore losing the possibility of multiplicity.

Gypsy (line 832). Ann was called a “gypsy” because she wandered around and played with boys (line 832). Ann was not content with “Barbies (dolls)” (line 829) or “tea parties” (line 836), both sedentary activities that did not provide her with the opportunity to run and exercise her obvious love of sports. Despite her enjoyment of activities prescribed for boys, Ann also mourned the loss of wearing dresses because this did not fit with her identity as someone who preferred to be active (line 855).

Puerto Rican nigger (line 293). Ann was the “darkest thing they had ever seen” in her new neighborhood that she moved to with her mother and two sisters following the divorce of her parents. With this label, Ann lost the comfort of taking her race, and appearance for granted. Instead this experience provided Ann an ability to empathize with others who were hurt by abusive prejudice.

Child of divorce (line 914). As a child of divorce, Ann watched her mother triumph and fail as she tried to make it on her own. Ann had to relocate to a different neighborhood following the divorce of her parents presumably because of the loss of financial resources that her father provided. Ann talked of her sister’s loss of friends due to the stigma attached to being a child of divorce and briefly commented on the stigma that she experienced in relation to this.

Child of an alcoholic mother (line 138). Ann attributed the death of her mother to her alcoholism, which she loosely linked to the difficulties that her mother faced as a divorced mother of three. The loss of Ann’s mother led Ann to be “in her own world” “turn[ed] upside down” until she found kinship with the strong women who surrounded her on the basketball team (lines 769-777). The loss of Ann’s mother symbolized the loss of her support that Ann “could do anything” (line 71). In an effort to avoid this loss completely, Ann incorporated her mother (or personification of her mother) and did not

let other's disapproval stop her from "pursuing the pleasure principle" and chose instead to do what she wanted to do (lines 844-851).

Lesbian (line 237-238). Ann admitted that she was hesitant to "come out" because of her own "discomfort with other's disdain" and her fear of making other's uncomfortable (line 468). As a result of her negative experiences, Ann has resolved herself to keeping silent in many settings and social circles and has lost her ability to be herself.

Feminized friend = loss for Ann (line 873). Despite Ann's claim that she did not let others stop her, she went on to tell a story of losing a close friend as a result of the friend's mother's efforts to "feminize" her (line 873). Ann did not believe that she was seen as a threat to her friend's "feminized" process, but nonetheless lost a close friend when the friend no longer had time for mutually enjoyed sports.

VII.Diversion, deflection, and reduction of Ann: Irigaray's argument.

Irigaray (1985) contended that the current gender system was one of diversion, deflection, and reduction of Other into sameness. This idea was supported by Ann's stories of not fitting in because she was "different".

Deflection: As one who did not ascribe to traditional categories, Ann was called a tomboy, a label she linked with one who was not a son or daughter, not quite a girl or a boy, but someone who did not fit (line 840). As a result of not being the same, she lost friends who were in her own words "feminized" by their mothers (line 873). When others could not stop Ann's behavior through shame (lines 841-844), attention was diverted away from her and she was forced to seek out her own support and "attach" herself or "latch" onto women who shared her ideals (line 983). Attention was **deflected** away from the fact that Ann was able to make choices about what she liked to do (line 848). Despite Ann's recognition that she made choices, she appealed to a deterministic concept of gender differentiation as biological. Ann's differences have been silenced by her own need to "get by" maintain a job, look out for future security, and maintain connections to those she loves.

Diversion: diversion through mystification about biological difference.

Ann initiated conversation about the differences between men and women. She acknowledged that there may be some biological basis for differences (lines 806-807), but could not articulate the biological factors that forged these differences when asked directly (line 808-809). She said three times that these differences existed (lines 784, 794, 799), but could not describe or explain the nature of these differences aside from being on a "different feeling level or something....kinda we operate on different levels or something" (lines 804-805). Ann's "different levels" statement pointed to power differences instead of biological differences (line 805). This discussion was diverted however, because of my decision to focus on the topic of origin instead of power.

Our difficulties locating power dynamics or strategies of oppression also fit with Irigaray's claim that patriarchy diverts attention away from vehicles that inflict the oppression. For example, Ann was very articulate about past experiences of gender oppression and easily came up with examples from her own life and others, when

prejudice and subsequent consequences occurred. She had a much more difficult time articulating her presumption about natural differences between men and women (lines 784, 794, and 799). She was very careful not to link inequality with any specific practice and instead commented that oppression could be the result of a “conservatism plot or ya know that started all this...” (line 378-379). She even went on to point to “it kinda started with the factions...the lesbians” (lines 381), “women turning on themselves” (line 376), “women don’t wanna say I’m a feminist,” “/...../[Women] make an excuse” (lines 385-391). I was also voracious in my support of Ann’s blame directed toward the marginalized groups for lack of collective action, and yet we were very careful not to implicate those groups or individuals who oppressed us.

Irigaray’s (1985) theory that/.../women are mimicking a language and cultural narrative that we have not produced fit with our difficulties escaping a self-blaming narrative. Ann and I have been so inoculated by the prejudicial narratives of marginalization that we do not recognize our own endogamies.

Reduction: reduced through silence.

Ann framed the gender question as a dichotomous choice between “being more alike or more different” (line 1145). In spite of reflecting on her own experiences of making multiple choices and forming her identity both inside and outside of gendered prescriptions, she was unable to conceptualize a less restrictive strategy for resistance. She even commented that gender issues were “covered up” (line 1016) but did not recognize that her desire to reduce the phenomenon to being more alike or more different probably came from our shared participation in Western culture and the subsequent value of simplicity over complexity. Even though Ann pointed to several strategies for resistance throughout the interview, she did not conceptualize her strategies as such, and instead reduced her own argument to being more alike or different.

Earlier in the interview, Ann called attention to the splitting among groups and along marginalized identifications that have served to divide and conquer unity and collective action against oppression for women, LGBT movement, and racial minorities. Ann also called attention to the loss of women’s centers, and lack of meetings for collective sharing and political action (line 519). Ann attributed the loss of energy around women’s movement to “women turning on themselves” (line 376).

VIII. Feminist identification:

Ann experienced support and validation of herself and her beliefs as she participated in feminist organizations. Ann’s validation at age twelve offered support for the anger she experienced when she did not get jobs because of her gender (lines 47-49). Ann felt “empowered” by learning about women’s issues and feminist theories when she participated in a course that taught her about the history of the women who fought for civil rights before her (lines 629-638). This class helped Ann feel connected to history and to her desire to participate actively in the fight for civil rights. Ann’s experiences in the women’s center at college seemed to hold the most significance for Ann (lines 205-271). She connected with the women at the center emotionally and politically. The center nurtured Ann literally and figuratively. Warm soup lunches were served and women gathered for the purpose of support and validation (lines 205-208). During this time, Ann was able to identify her sexual orientation and “come out” without outing herself from

the group (line 434). Ann described the “unity among all women” as they were united in their cause for women’s rights and need to connect.

Despite the connection she felt she also recognized that the mark of lesbian carried some mark of differentiation even among this “united” group. Later in the interview, Ann also admitted that she was often disappointed by the lack of support provided by the women’s movement for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender issues.

Ann also talked about the lack of support for feminism and the negative connotations that this term evoked for many women. Ann initiated discussion about the excuses that people offered when they were willing to identify as feminism and how excuse driven explanations served to distance themselves from advocating for feminism (lines 383-395). She also highlighted the negative associations made by those opposed to feminism; feminists are baby killers, will take your job, and want to be lesbians (lines 399-427). Ann also believed that men differentiated themselves from gender issues and if they did not, it would be used as a ploy to meet women and not taken seriously (lines 607-624).

IX. Project as collective action:

Just as I was trying to move away from hierarchical constructions by preserving views of participants, I found myself continually working to minimize Ann’s ideas about natural differences between men and women and even used terms such as “gay issues” and “guys” to refer to Ann and her sisters. I do believe, however, that the relatively open dialogue showcased the multiplicity of gendered identity, as we were able to include race, history, and sexual orientation. I believe that a lot of ambiguity, contradiction, and ambivalence would have been lost in a positivist or objective methodology.

I was most excited by the dialogue that was provoked by meeting with Ann. I felt united with the feminist movement by way of discussing gender and listening as Ann shared her experiences. I felt comfortable telling Ann about my agenda for the project and believe that this disclosure helped to disrupt the notion that researchers should be objective and therefore not influence the information that emerges from research. I felt empowered to become more of an active participant, and advocate for women. I also believed that this freedom to share and validate Ann’s experiences empowered Ann to see herself as an activist from the age of twelve through to the times we met. I also hoped that this became clearer to Ann as she reviewed the accounts and we continued our journey in this project together.

Reading for the voice of hierarchy: evaluating the totalizing claims of the study.

First interview with Participant Ann: Reading 5.

Key: Bold script was used to highlight the main issues.

The following questions were posed originally by Lather (1991) and were used to evaluate the degree to which I was able to replicate tenets posed by feminist post-structuralist researchers (p. 84). This evaluation was done prior to meeting with Ann for the second interview.

1. Did I encourage ambivalence, ambiguity and multiplicity, or did I impose order and structure?

I imposed some structure to the interview by having a feminist agenda and seeking narratives of oppression. I did however, pose the initial question about gender in a somewhat open ended way as I said “anything that came to mind” (line 42). Despite this ambiguity it is likely that Ann knew that I was looking for narratives about negative experiences with gender. With respect to this influence Ann already had a strong alignment with feminism which suggests that she would have talked about narratives of oppression even if the research focused on something else. As such, I believe that our conversation might not have been as open to positive experiences of gender.

2. What elements of legislation and prescription underlie my efforts?

I aimed to valorize women’s oppression, and validate this agenda accordingly. I also tried to evoke thought and new understandings of feminism even to those who did not necessarily see themselves as feminist. Because Ann aligned herself with the feminist agenda, I found myself wanting to validate her experiences.

I also wanted to encourage Ann to rethink her stance on biological gender differences and tended to push her to rethink this stance. When she couldn’t come up with anything she did acknowledge that the difference could be environmentally based. My desire to showcase post-structural insights and encourage a fellow feminist to question this assumption perhaps led me to pressure Ann too much. As a result, Ann may not have felt as comfortable discussing other ideas. On the other hand, I think that Ann was willing to talk freely, and did so as evidenced by jokes and initiation of new topics without my prompting.

3. Did I create a text that was multiple without being paralyzed?

I believe that the analysis of Ann’s narratives highlighted change in Ann’s perspective of herself as activist, supporter of others, and all around thoughtful person. I also think Ann’s narrative highlighted the connection between feminist post-structural insights and lived experience, while also providing a forum for discussion and subsequent connection among two women.

4. Have I questioned the textual staging of knowledge in a way that keeps my own authority from being reified?

I tried to do this throughout the analysis by documenting my motivations, catching site of decisions to alter conversational shifts, and scrutinizing choices I made while interpreting text.

I was also careful to explain to Ann that I would ask for input but would not make changes unless they were made on the basis of feeling too exposed or vulnerable.

5. Who were my ‘Others’?

Ann was the primary “Other,” a feminist who participated in many political activities in an effort to show support and advocate for recognition and change. As such, she provided very rich narratives that helped elucidate issues within the phenomenon of gender and other marks of oppression. I felt a collegial atmosphere during our meeting that increased as we shared more of ourselves and each received validation and acknowledgement for our efforts.

Another primary “Other” was myself as both part of the text and outside of the text as an interpreter with a different context.

Another “Other” in this study is the theoretical work that I used to elucidate Ann’s narratives.

Another “Other” in the study is the audience that will take up this study and determine the value.

6. What binaries structured my arguments?

The binary of gender structured my argument by virtue of using this mark as a way to separate those who I did not solicit for participation and those that were solicited.

The binary of researcher and researched structured the interaction as I ultimately made decisions to encourage or discourage various stories while Ann provided something that I wanted.

7. Did my work multiply political spaces and prevent the concentration of power in any one point?

I believe that this work did provide a political space by virtue of valorizing Ann’s voice and calling attention to means of political activism through dialogue. I also believe that Ann and I both felt a renewed sense of unity with collective activism, feminism, LGBT movement, and racial prejudice. Ann’s ability to locate problematic issues that hampered activism provided a means for highlighting ways to improve political action.

8. Did my work go beyond critique to help produce plural and diverse spaces for the emergence of subjugated knowledge and for the organization of resistance?

I believe that the project itself stands as a testament to dialogue and the importance of accounting for complexity of oppression. I also believe that strategies of resistance were an ongoing part of the dialogue in large part because of Ann’s steadfast involvement in political activities of resistance. In addition, the pedagogical aspects of this methodology serves as a means of resistance in itself.

Reading for plot, characters, recurrent images, words, metaphors and contradictions.

First Interview with Participant Samantha: Reading 1

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

Setting up interview: Review of my feminist stance, goals for second and third interview, and letting Samantha in on my agenda to disrupt power dynamics because of my feminist stance and subsequent decision to have her review the interpretations that I made.

Samantha's identifications:

Samantha is a 27 year old, African American, Roman Catholic psychiatric social worker with a masters degree who took her gender focused course in the "Spring of '98" in the psychology department of her undergraduate institution (lines 24- 32).

Gender-focused course:

Samantha was drawn to the gender-focused course because it was "**small**" (line 59) and she thought it would be "**interesting**" (lines 61-68), "**something new to learn**" (line 64). Samantha was not drawn to the course because she identified gender as a marker of discrimination. In Samantha's words "[**gender**] was **something I had never focused on** because most of the time I would go towards...um classes to do with race and religion but I never looked at gender" (lines 66-67). When asked if the course changed the way she looked at things, Samantha said that it did since she "**never really thought** anything about the way that women are perceived **and things like that..um**" (lines 122-123).

The class was "all women maybe I think there was one guy" (line 61-62). Samantha liked the class because of the "**enthusiasm of the instructor**" (line 85) "you could tell when she was teaching that **she was really excited about it** ("**feminism and the way women are perceived**" (line 88)" (lines 88-89). S liked participating in get together's outside of class and discussions in class (line 79). S liked the way the **instructor "listened to everyone"** (lines 89 & 97). S liked the "**debate about different issues**" instead of there being "too much lecture" (lines 97-101). S had **no negative associations with this class, or at least "nothing stuck out"** (line 109).

Change due to course:

S reported that the course "**really did**" (line 118) change her because it "made" her look at "particularly women and the media" (line 120). The course also seemed to alert S to the whole idea that gender roles often placed women in a one down position. S had not seen that because she was raised by a single mother and had friends who were also raised by single parents. Only during college, did S become aware of the issues that women faced.

Lack of multiracial representation:

Samantha was always aware of the lack of representation for racial groups aside from Caucasians. In her words, "well where are all the Black people and where are all the

Asians? Why are there no commercials with Asians and Hispanics?” “What you see in main stream culture it seemed like there was always Caucasian Americans and preferably male that you saw in this particular light.” (lines 133-136).

Curiosity about people’s unprompted separation into any “different” group:

S was particularly struck by the seemingly unprompted separation of groups along racial lines that she witnessed as an undergraduate student. In S’s words, “as soon as you went into the cafeteria it was like any different group went into their...ya know” (line 140).---I take this up as marginalized group. S “wanted to find out different theories and studies that had been done about why does that happen...” (lines 142-143).

Seeking knowledge about religion to evaluate her own choice:

S chose courses based on areas of interest. She chose “a lot of religion courses”...”just to make sure...Hey am I doin the right religion thing?” (line 151). “ya know..just explorin” (line 153).

Gender didn’t stand out in S’s childhood:

S attributed her lack of awareness of gender to the lack of male role models and strength of female role models. “I didn’t look at gender/.../growing up. I didn’t have much of a male..influence cause my mom was always there and I’m a woman just like her and I never really thought that much about /.../gender issues/.../” (lines 155-159). S’s friends were also from “single parent homes too” (lines 179-180). S assumed that women were “very strong” like her mother and she “never thought that (getting married and having kids without occupational goals) could be a goal” (lines 199-200)/..../”for a woman!” (line 202).

Gender issues identified:

In college, S noticed that her new friends’ parents did not adopt the same gender role ideology as those parents she grew up with. S recognized that friends parents’ interacted “like it seemed **like the father was the head of the household and in charge** and the woman was just like ok whatever you say honey kind of role” (lines 172-173). Mate dependence was seen as a risky choice because in S’s words “what happens if the mate isn’t there” (line 215), “what happens if god forbid/.../your husband gets in an accident and he’s dead. What are you going to do? Ya know?” (lines 235-236).

Gender stance beginning to emerge as S differentiated herself from women who become dependent on their husbands and do not pursue careers:

S was surprised by peers’ future expectations and goals, particularly those ascribed to traditional roles of wife and mother. S stated “like that makes entirely no sense to me!” (line 208). S identified the danger of becoming dependent on mate- “what happens if that mate isn’t there?” (line 215). By watching her mother’s “initiative” to go out and “get a better job so she could get more money” (lines 220-221), S “kind of always looked at it like well this is what you should do. (lines 227-228). S believed that women should have “options you (meaning women) shouldn’t just limit yourself to one thing!” (line 254).

S's issue as she lived it in her relationship with her boyfriend and his family:

S and her boyfriend identified with different expectations for gender roles. S reported that "my boyfriend..well his mother was like stay at home mom and raised ya know...he and his sister and never worked and still doesn't work. And doesn't plan on ever working and he's 35...I'm like what?" (lines 256-260). When I asked if her boyfriend's mother said things to her or influenced her relationship, S was quick to say "Nooo..He says things! It's more (voice lowered and sarcastic) oh when we get married and have kids..I want you to stay home for..// interruption by me" (lines 264-265). S-"I (meaning BF) want you to stay home for three years and raise it cause I don't want to put the kids in daycare....And I'm like..Excuse me! Ya know kinda thing." (lines 270-271).

S called attention to the issues that bother her about her Boyfriend's stance on gender and how he conveyed that to her:

S did not subscribe to her boyfriend's gender role expectations for their future. S explained that "I (S) didn't go for my master's degree to stay home and sit on my butt!" (line 273). S did not mind the idea of taking time off from work to spend with her children, but was upset that he "[told] her well this is what I (BF) want." (lines 275-276). S agreed with my summary that she wanted to "talk about it before"...it determined [that] Oh this is what women do. This is what men do kinda thing" (lines 280-282). Goals and "hav[ing] a career and do[ing] things for myself like my own goals" are important to S (lines 287-288).

S getting hurt on the job- gendered perceptions of the incident:

S referenced getting hurt on her job by being attacked by a patient. This was the incident that prevented us from meeting the first time. Being attacked as a female caused gender to become an issue between she and her BF for "a hot second" (lines 291-293). S "didn't want to come back to work." And "was kind of toying with it like gosh..ya know I bust my butt at this job...For what" "to get hurt?" (lines 295-298). S's boyfriend reacted to this incident as well and offered his advice. According to S "he says well quit and ya know I'll take care of you." (line 298). S explained that she would quit her job "if I was your wife" because she would feel more secure that her BF would not "leave [her] hanging there" (lines 300-305). S decided that she had to "figure out something" and so she went on interviews and sent out resumes, but ultimately decided against leaving her job before finding another one (lines 308-312).

S's boyfriend believed that S should let others help her (line 316). S believed that traditional gender expectations played a role in her boyfriend's view because, in her words "there would never be a question" of depending on S if he got hurt and decided to leave his job (lines 320-321). She did say "he might question going back to his job" but "he'd probably say ok, I'm not going back to that particular assignment I'm going elsewhere and you (referencing boss) need to find something for me cause I am not going back there" (lines 323-325). S explained that "he just wouldn't consider not working that's just not something he would consider." (lines 327-328). S believed her boyfriend thought of "[her] stuff is trivial (line 340)." Not that their not important just not as

important as a house or other things” (line346-347). “So I think he looks at my job as expendable”

S has a choice of whether or not to work, while her boyfriend does not.

S believed this difference in perspective came from “I guess in terms of gender roles/.../I think with him/.../he’s very traditional and where’s um I’m not” (lines 363).

Since differences in gender roles exists, how is this managed within the relationship?:

S-“**I guess I like that he’s chivalrous**”- (line 367). S-“he does treat me ya know ...like a lady...” (line369). Treating S like a lady meant that her BF “opened the door for [her]” “pulling out [her] chair/.../ and things like that..ya know...just to make me feel special” (lines 371-372).

Problems with BF’s traditional belief system:

S “I guess for me I would like to know that I have options...not that you’re telling me to do this” (line 377). S-“I want options and then we discuss what’s best for both of us...not this is what you have to do and you better do it” (lines 379-380). S-“[S] knows there’s a difference” (line 387). S knows “that he thinks there’s a difference too..be don’t really don’t really discuss it hat much””It’s only when certain things come up” (lines 389-391).

We backed away from S’s romantic relationship topic as S seemed to catch site of the project and seemed uncomfortable sharing her romantic relationship with a stranger.

S initiated topic change-Catching site of degrading lyrics that depict women negatively:

S explained that she remained unaware of oppressive gender images until participating in the gender-focused course. In her words, “I never really thought about the words. I knew the words..but I never really thought about the words until like I went to the class.” (lines 421-422). S went on to say that “kind of like my god that’s really degrading and I can’t believe that’s really the words to that song..And in actuality I notice it more now”. (lines 424-425). S “Like I’m not gonna buy a CD when it’s really horrible (degrading to women) but like if it’s on in a club and I wanna dance like I’ll still dance to it like if it’s on the radio I’ll probably listen to it.” (lines 430-431). S preferred “mainly hip hop and rap/...../and R&B” (lines 433-434). According to S, “hip hop and rap especially pretty much treat women in a degrading [way]” (lines 434-435).

Emergence of degraded lyrics about women:

According to S, “During the late ...early nineties especially (hip hop and rap) was really positive” (lines 448-449). —“upliftment of culture” (line 452).

“and then in the mid nineties, like gangster rap out of like California” (line 454-455).

S theorized about the cause of disrespect of women. In S’s words, “maybe they don’t they don’t respect themselves and it that why they don’t respect women. Or they have bad relationships with their moms. Or I have no idea.” (lines 460-461).

S linked current issues of image “back to slavery times” when “black men were looked at like these sexually hungry beasts that would rape a white woman,” (lines 477-478), “really masculine and fierce” (line 481), “you gotta keep them in control..they’re

animals kinda thing” (line 483). S-“**Black women** were kinda looked at as **real sexual** too but in terms of **you can just take advantage of them** ..you can **do whatever you want** and doesn’t matter about feelings or anything” (lines 485-487). S believed that this “attitude is just perpetuated generations ..generations down the road...its like our own people are thinkin that about us” (lines 489-

I brought in the connection to the current hierarchical construction by asking about the power dynamics that seemed to be influencing this image and subsequent identification. I said “this..kinda the hierarchy in almost sounds like ya know the slave master the more slaves you have underneath ..lower than....” (lines 505-506) “makes you feel better” (line 508).....”So who’s below (Black men)?/.../”(line 512) “Black women particularly” (line 514). S noted that the danger of this message about Black women and men was that-“so many people pick it up” (line 466). S added that “Women rappers are kinda like not all but some like um Foxy Brown and lil’Kim they come out and like the stuff on their album is like they’re the biggest whores in the world” (lines 468-470). S added that “it’s the men in particular...like rappers like think that about us (women)/.../as property” (line 493).

Perceptions of illegitimate children in African American culture-women take responsibility while men are not expected to do the same:

S-“And another thing..this is a big problem” (line 519) because the“African American culture looks at illegitimate children phenomenon” (line 525). S was particularly disturbed by the “usage of the term babymama..like that’s a good thing” (line 527). S sarcastically noted that it was “like a good thing and it’s ok for a guy to have like three babymama’s and he doesn’t take care of of...any of the kids but.” (lines 530-531). S-“[Men] are gonna do whatever I want anyway” (line 533). S noted that the predominate problem with the differences in expectations between men and women in Black culture was that “**(Women)-We’re supposed to do everything...**And the men are not responsible” (lines 568-569). S added that “Women are just stuck and they have to make do and **rely on other women to help them out.**” (lines 578-579).

Reconnecting to personal:

“(S) was kind of reluctant to continue dating my current boyfriend because her in fact does have a baby’s mama” (lines 539-540). S’s BF “does take responsibility” (line 569)/.../thus, he is not like those that S criticized.

Consequences of growing up without male role models:

Personal Experience-

S “didn’t have a father cause he died..not because he didn’t want to be there! O r he didn’t get along with my mom” (lines 558-559). S’s mom “feels bad and tries to overcompensate” for S’s brother not having a male role model because of the death of their father. (lines 588-590). S’s brother was “coddl[ed]” (line 589) and “commute[s]” (lines 592-593). S has a problem with the fact that her brother has “never been out of the house” (line 593), but “[mother] has no problem with that” (line 595). S- “Women have to do so much. They have to do everything and then they don’t even know if they’re doing it right” (lines 597-598). S agreed with me that-“We (women) kind of internally expect more from ourselves than men” (lines 603-605). S again attributed the

“babymama situation” to this expectation of women. (line 608). To S this is “just not right” (line 614).

Changes in time:

Positive:

S said “Oh well at least in terms of **legal system you can go to court** and get people to pay **child support**” (lines 617-618).

Negative:

S explained that “even like mediawise it seems like they try to ..say like it’s (to treat women like babymama’s) ok” (line 622-624). S offered example of a song where women are “just screaming it like..like it’s ok” (lines 630-632). **S views women’s role as child caretakers as the “least changed”** (line 639). S agreed with me that she felt there had been a change in men taking responsibility where they used to be “forced to take responsibility” they no longer are (lines 648-650). S-“you get the women who just don’t care either” (lines 666-667).

Interest in participation.

S “likes to **help** out people when they’re doing research studies” (line 673). S-“**Cool! Ya know...**” **I’m just interested in how ya know different people think** and different topics. S explained that she liked to think about topics from her **gender focused course** “that got me interested” (lines 681-683).

Fertility: Women equated with child bearing:

S recalled a particular topic of interest in her gender-focused course that she was personally linked to, and surprised by. In her words, “There was an article like...Are you a real woman if you can’t have children.” (line 689). S-“that kinda stuck with me..I.I.. never though that you weren’t.” (lines 691-692). S went on to explain her connection to this topic by saying “and then like myself like there’s a question whether or not I can....” (lines 695-696). S went on to offer reasons for her differentiation between gender as an identity separate from biological characteristics. In her words “there’s totally different ways you don’t have to birth actually birth a child” (lines 701-702). S’s Boyfriend at the time of undergraduate “says to me Oh! Well..Ya know you won’t be a real woman anymore if you can’t have kids!” (lines 713-714). S noted that prior to her experience “that thought...never crossed my mind and then in class they brought it up again.” (lines 716-717).

Speaking up about personal link to fertility issue:

S spoke up when no one else did and assumed she was the only one effected by this. I questioned this assumption and said that “I wonder about that maybe you weren’t the only one in that class.” (line 738). S agreed that, “Yeah, maybe I was the only one ya know brave enough to talk about it” (line 741). S-“I guess cause people just ya know they look at that whole going back to that traditional role...” “Of a woman wife mother and if you can’t be mother like what are you doing? Ya know!” (lines 747-750).

Catching site of issues: awareness and getting by:

I was curious about S's tendency to back away from her insights about issues of marginalization. During the interview I told S about this reaction by saying "But it does really sound to me like these things are something you think about a lot...not just gender but all..all these issues kind of marginalization issues..race..religion.." (lines 753-756). S agreed that she was more aware of issues, but rarely caught sight of the degree to which she detected discrimination. S said "like um maybe certain topics like if I see something on the news or I I'm talking to somebody about something/...../You're right it will it will come up." (lines 761-764). I stayed focused on this issue and clarified that "it sounds like for you..you kind of take that for granted like you assume that like anyone would notice that? (issues of people being oppressed for whatever reason)" (lines 765-766). S agreed and elaborated that "Yes! Yes you're right and I didn't start realizing that I took it for granted until graduate school...When I was in class./..../(lines 767-769). S was surprised that people were "closed minded" (line 778), "strict moral code" (line 778), "It had to be that way or the highway. Kinda I look at it like that conservative right wing way of thinking" (lines 781-782).

S did not aim to change their minds but did take offense when they "don't want to do it" (lines 814-815). "There's some things that I (S) really feel strongly about..or I don't agree /.../or whatever..ok well **let me hear your point/.../I'd like to hear what you think.**" (lines 815-819).

Positive view of current cultural atmosphere:

S-"that's what makes it a wonderful place to live ya know in terms of being in the world because **there's so many different views.** And everything I don't have to agree with you and you don't have to agree with me/.../but ya know (lines 825-827).

Gender and career choice.

S "It didn't influence personally cause initially I wanted to be a psychologist" but decided against this when she saw another person working on their dissertation. We laugh at parallel process-again S is helping someone with their dissertation.-she is again in a one down position (lines 840-848). S views psychology as "going on up the educational ladder" (lines 850-852).

S didn't notice that most people in social work were women until grad school.-She's noticed that "they (men) all wanted to go into administrative type positions" and typically are in "charge" (lines 864-866). — **Women** wanted to do "**direct care or counseling type things**" while **men sought administrative positions and got them (lines 864-866).**

S revealed her own internalized gender bias/expectations by revealing her views. In her words, "in the social work department you kinda look at the men as the ones who can do things a little bit better and a little/.../ya know and that kinda pisses me off but...I don't know why I don't know why that is."(lines 866-873).

Race and Gender juxtaposed:

S-"I guess because I'm black I..I look at race a little more sensitively"
S-"I don't know whether it is or it isn't but/ .../it does come up in my head sometimes" (lines 897-898). S explained that the majority of social work staff is Black females, and it

stood out to S that white males “get preference for different things” and she wonders if race is the factor of differentiation. (lines 875-884).

Not enough information to identify as feminist:

Factors that get in the way:

S- “I don’t see myself as one cause **I never defined it**” (line 910).

S- “I feel like maybe **I’d have to know a little more about it...read up on it.**” (line 918).

S- “but then you know you get the **stereotypical view** of feminists as like these **bra burning women running around** and saying **we’re equal ya know....we can do whatever we want** but you know what I mean....Like God I was like **I don’t identify with that** but then I ...I don’t have a definition for myself so...” (lines 912-914).

S- “**from what I learned over the years it just isn’t enough**” (line 928).

Wrapping up:

S had **no questions** for me but did say that it “**felt nice to be able to express you know your views in an open atmosphere**” (lines 939-940).

Reading for the voice of I, looking for ways in which “Ann” and I speak about, and experience our selves.

First interview with Participant Samantha: Reading 2.

Key: Bold script used to highlight main issues.

Setting up interview:

I take up role as leader by addressing the goal of the research to enact a feminist stance and disrupt power dynamics by having S review any and all interpretations that I make following this initial meeting.

After the initial questions about identifying information and setting stage for discussion by asking for information about her gender focused course and experiences with gender issues, S took initiative and addressed issues of gender, race, religion, and her ideology about marginalization. Throughout most of the interview my participation was limited to um hm’s and questions to encourage S to elaborate on her experiences. S’s pace throughout the interview was quick and she rarely paused. At the end of the interview S reported that she enjoyed being able to express her views in an open forum. S’s process throughout the interview moved from personal to cultural perspectives and back again. Just as this shift would suggest, S is someone who strives to change her behavior in accordance with her ideology as it develops.

“Samantha”

S is a 27 year old, African American, Roman Catholic psychiatric social worker with a masters degree who took her gender focused course in the “spring of ’98.”

In addition to identifying with racial, religious, and, professional markers, S also seemed to be **detail oriented and careful** to provide as much specific information as possible. Later she even commented that she had considered reviewing course information prior to our meeting so she would be prepared and only paused when she wanted to take time to consider her answer before offering it (line 44-45 & 109).

Gender focused course and the awareness gained.

S enjoyed her gender focused course because she had a “very good relationship with everyone in the class” (lines 72-73) which was aided by the instructor’s enthusiasm for the course and desire to do things with the students outside of the class (lines 72-73 & 88-89). S preferred debate and discussion to lecture (lines 97-101). S felt changed by the course because it “made her look at...particularly women and the media” (lines 118-120).

Even though S “never really thought anything about the way that women are perceived,” she was someone who recognized that people were not treated equally, and tended to pursue issues of marginalization that she felt strongly about such as race and religion. She was aware of racial groups being unrepresented by the media and that people often separated accordingly with no provocation (lines 132-136 & 138-140). S also pursued her interest in religion in an effort to evaluate whether she was “doin the right religion thing” (lines 147-151).

Growing up with a single mother.

S attributed her lack of sensitivity towards women's issues to growing up with her mother without "much of a male influence" (lines 155-159). S did not become aware that all women were not the "head of the household" like her mother and sometimes took a "whatever you say honey kind of role" with their husbands (lines 173-175). This was a surprise to S because she had grown up assuming that she would work and should not "depend" on her "mate" (lines 207-213). Even though S said that women whose views were otherwise "made no sense to [her]" she was very careful not to judge these other women as "weak" or "subservient" even though their behavior fit accordingly (lines 172 & 207-213).

By watching her mother "take initiative" and return to college to "get a better job with more money" after her husband died, S internalized the importance of taking initiative and being able to support yourself and your family. S was reflective of the fact that she looks at education and occupational skills as security "because of [her] experience" (lines 238-239). Several times, S repeated the imminent danger of women losing their husbands for one reason or another, and not being able to support themselves. She talked about having a similar issue with her boyfriend as he often encouraged her to rely on him and "depend on other people" (lines 314-319).

S wanted options, while boyfriend assumed traditional gender roles would dictate choice.

The issue between she and her boyfriend seemed to boil down to the fact that each of them grew up in a household where one caretaker adopted the role of financial supporter and the other emotional. Each of them identified with the parent whose gender fit with their own, and both seem to have a difficult time trusting that they would have the option to do differently should circumstances arise. (lines 256-265).

The lack of options due to gender role ideology did seem to be identified as an issue for S. She talked of wanting "options and not limiting [her]self to one thing" (lines 254-255). Because her boyfriend did not recognize that S was not willing to accept that she had no options aside from staying home and caring for children, arguments have come up. S took issue more with her boyfriend's "telling [her] well this is what I want" instead of talking and coming to an agreement (lines 275-276). As S's boyfriend adopted a more traditional stance that assumed S would adopt her role as mother as her sole identification, he also became more patronizing by telling S instead of talking with S about her feelings and desires. This difference in gender role ideology also became an issue when S was recently hurt at her job, and her boyfriend talked of financially supporting her and minimized her desire to support herself.

S's boyfriend is taking up a stereotypical stance that women should be in the home and this stance created a problem when he applied this to a woman who has other goals in mind.

This disagreement about gender roles has created discord in their relationship while also putting S in a position where she feels that her "stuff is trivial" and not as important as his financial priorities. (lines 340, & 346-347).

S pursuing goals within an ambivalent gendered conceptualization.

S is someone who **took initiative** to put out resumes and maintain her job responsibilities. She did this because of her **desire to pursue her own goals of paying off debt and having “options” to do a job that made a “difference” by virtue of her own value system (lines 342 & 377)**. S insisted that she was not someone who responded well to being told what to do in accordance with the “traditional” (line 364 & 382) gender roles that her boyfriend prescribed. However, she admitted that she did like to be treated “like a lady” by having “doors opened” for her and “chairs pulled out” because this behavior made her feel “special” (lines 371-372). She also liked the idea that her boyfriend “would take care” of her if she asked. S did not see her desire to be treated like a lady as a contradiction to her desire to be financially independent. Even though she experienced her boyfriend’s demands as oppressive, she did not see this as an issue that came up all the time (lines 389-391).

I, on the other hand, had a difficult time maintaining an open stance when S said that her boyfriend told her that he wanted her to stay home when they had children (lines 262-266). I interrupted her and said with sarcasm and disbelief that I could not believe “he said this to you” (line 266). Looking back over the transcript I was not surprised to find that I was judgmental, but I was surprised by how often I expressed offense. Ultimately, I was able to become more neutral, which was probably a result of hearing Samantha’s shared rejection of being told what to do based on traditional gender roles and patronizing male-female relational dynamics.

Informed consumer acting in accordance to views.

As a result of her growing awareness from participation in a gender-focused course and subsequent attunement to “degrading” portrayals of women in music, S became more selective in buying practices. S no longer bought a “CD when it’s really horrible” but will dance and listen to it otherwise (lines 430-431).

S as someone who values but does not expect to have others want to hear her views.

S expressed surprise when I asked her to elaborate on her ideas about the emergence of degrading portrayals of women. I had to request that S elaborate on her views several times throughout the interview, which suggested to me that I either did not encourage her to discuss issues that she identified, or that she did not expect that this would be important. She did, however, mention several times, particularly about her gender course, that she appreciated the instructor’s openness to other’s views (lines 89 & 97). She also noted that fellow students in her social work courses “amazed” and “infuriated” her when they were “so closed minded” (lines 771-792). She also attributed her interest in the present study because “it was nice to be able to express [her] views in an open atmosphere (lines 939-940).

S as someone who is concerned about the degraded views of women in African American culture

S pointed to history, both personal and general historical, to derive reasons for the degraded views of women that she identified. She located two issues-degraded sexualized language in music and subsequent portrayal of women as “property” (line 493). She pointed out that this degraded view of women was not limited to a few artists (line 466) and was not limited to men either (lines 468-470). She attributed this portrayal

of women to personal histories of artists “maybe they don’t respect themselves....or they had bad relationships with their moms” (lines 460). She was also able to link this view of women to “back in slavery times” and the views of Black men as “sexually hungry beasts that would rape white women” and “Black women as real sexual...in terms of you can just take advantage of them..you can do whatever...” (lines 477-487). As such, S admitted that she had “thought about this” and came up with these theories by dialoguing with her boyfriend (lines 475-476).

Even though both she and her boyfriend linked this to the historical oppression of Black men and women, neither or them linked this to larger cultural oppression that continues to plague Black men and women. Instead S said that “its not like the white people are thinking about us its like our own people are thinkin that bout us...men in particular” (lines 490-491). Instead, S saw this as an issue for “[her] culture in general” (lines 523-525).

In addition to her concern about music, **S was more “infuriated” (line 566) by the common acceptance that “we’re (black women) supposed to do everything..and the men are not responsible” (lines 568-570).** S linked this to her current boyfriend and was able to differentiate his willingness to support his child, to those who “spread their seed allover” (lines 575-576). S considered breaking up with her current boyfriend because he had a child out of wedlock, but decided against this because she recognized that his situation was different from those she opposed.

Women alone as childbearers and caretakers

Responsibility is valued by S, and she is offended by those who do not hold themselves accountable for their actions. This was clearly **modeled by S’s mother** who felt a need to “over compensate for her son’s lack of a male role model (lines 588-590). This may also be the link to S’s belief that Black men and women need to change their behavior, while letting “white people” off the hook (lines 490-491 & 523-525). S talked of **Black women accepting complete responsibility for childcare and the limits that this imposed, and felt that this view of women was the “least changed” in terms of roles for women.**

S referenced the debate about women maintaining their womanhood if they did not bear children. S was not someone who subscribed to this role and was surprised to discover that anyone held this view (lines 691-692). S shifted to her personal confrontation with this issue in college when she was told that she may not be able to bear children (lines 694-696), and reported that she never viewed this as a question of womanhood or even motherhood because she was aware of other options (lines 700-706). Again gender was not at issue for S, until she was confronted with her ex-boyfriend told her that she would “not be a real woman anymore if [she] can’t have kids” (lines 713-714). S was “appalled by this” “of course” and still maintained her stance and her voice when the issue was brought up again in the gender focused course (lines 716-717). S was “brave enough to talk about (her potential difficulties bearing a child)” but was the only one in class to do so (lines 738-743). S initially assumed that no one else spoke up because this was not an issue they faced due to age, but agreed with me that this may not have been voiced due to concerns about stigma (lines 738-743).

S is someone who is “brave.” She spoke up when others did not and asserted that she is who she is, and is not “gonna get all upset about it” and let others take away her sense of self (lines 743-745).

S is surprised when others are not open-minded that others will take up this stance. As a result, S seems to take issues with things especially when closed-minded views are highlighted by “something on the news or if [she’s] talking to somebody about something” (lines 761-762). **S’s assumption about others being open minded seemed to provide her with the space to not take issue with oppressive stances in a conscious way.** Instead, these issues became conscious only when they arise circumstantially. When they do become conscious to S, she alters her behavior accordingly and is willing “to talk about it” (line 821).

Reflections on oppressive gender dynamics

Talking about her frustration with others not being open minded led S to reflections about “**who’s in charge**” (line 865). When S entered graduate school she noticed for the first time that she could “count on one hand how many men were in [her] program” (lines 859-890). Right away she noted that the men sought “administrative type position[s]” and noticed later when she graduated that men, though the minority, were primarily “in charge ” (line 865). She also added that the men in the social work department were looked at as “the ones who can do things a little bit better” (lines 868-869). This “kinda pisses [S] off” but she backed away from this insight and said that she “didn’t know why this (assumption) was” (lines 871 & 873). **She clarified that the gender differentiation did not stand out to her as much as the racial inequality,** since she “look[s] at race a little more sensitively” (lines 875-877). She was not convinced that the disproportionate number of “**white men**” (line 879) **in powerful positions was an issue of race or gender and continued to wonder aloud 5 times, if this “was the issue”** (lines 873, 879, 884, 895 900).

Feminism to be or not to be

S **did not “see [her]self as one** cause she never defined [feminism]” (line 910).

S is someone who is careful not to identify with an ideology if she “feel[s] like [she]’d have to know a little more about it/..../so that [she] could make up an educated decision instead of just fragmented things” (lines 918 & 926).

S did enjoy talking about gender issues even though she did not explicitly identify herself as someone who felt oppressed.

Reading for process of interaction between Samantha and I.

First Interview with Participant Samantha: Reading 3.

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

Setting up the interview:

Samantha and I met after one cancellation and about three phone contacts. S cancelled our first meeting because of an attack by a patient, two hours before our scheduled meeting time. We preliminarily set another appointment for the week she returned from the vacation that had also been planned prior to the meeting and the attack. She expressed concern about this putting me behind schedule. Even though I was disappointed about not meeting with S, I was happy to hear that she was ok and encouraged that she was still interested and had even anticipated setting another meeting. S and I talked once after she returned from vacation and we set the initial meeting for the following day. Needless to say, S's reliability and dependability shone through, and eased my concerns about participants dropping out of the study prior to completion, or at least concerns about this participant.

We met at the end of Samantha's day of clinical work, at her job site. S explained that she was drawn to the poster about gender issues and initiated contact to begin the interview process. She told me over the phone that she had participated in research during her years in graduate school and liked to help those who did research. She also mentioned that she was interested in gender issues and was drawn to participating in a project that focused on them. Even before meeting it was clear that S was someone who liked to care for others.

S and I are both in the mental health field and shared the common goal of preferring clinical work to other options. We shared the context of graduate school and were similar in terms of age, Samantha is 27 years old and I am 29. These similarities helped to ease the dialogue between us and Samantha took an active role in the research soon after I introduced the topic and explained my feminist stance and agenda for the project.

After the initial questions about identifying information and setting the stage for discussion by asking for information about her gender focused course and experiences with gender issues, S took initiative and addressed issues of gender, race, religion, and her ideology about marginalization. Throughout most of the interview my participation was limited to um hm's and questions to encourage S to elaborate on her experiences. S's pace throughout the interview was quick and she rarely paused or needed much by way of direction or prompting. At the end of the interview S reported that she enjoyed being able to express her views in an open forum. S's process throughout the interview moved from personal to cultural perspectives and back again. Just as this shift would suggest, S is someone who strives to change her behavior in accordance with her ideology as it develops.

Even though Samantha did not identify as a feminist, she was aware of the differentiation between expectations for women and men, and those of different racial identifications. She was someone who evaluated decisions about her spending practices

and relationships on the ideologies and issues that she felt strongly about, while maintaining a non-judgmental stance that provided room for further change. This openness to other's opinions was apparent in the study by way of direct disclosures and her willingness to reserve judgement about me and my agenda even though she did not identify with this agenda herself.

Passion for exploring ideas and issues.

S called attention to the idea the her gender focused course covered “as many areas as we/ .../as we could /.../in the short time in the semester” (lines 54-57). The emphasis on “short time” suggested that she felt there was more to discuss, while also showing her desire to do more.

Even though S was concerned about race and religion and had pursued classes in each, she did not explore or think about gender being a mark of oppression until she went to college. She took this course because she had not taken any previous courses in gender studies and because she liked the idea that it was small in terms of class size (lines 59 & 67).

S appreciated the research interview because she liked the “open forum to discuss her ideas” and because she wanted to “see how somebody else thinks” (line 944).

Parallel Process.

Just as it took a while for Samantha to identify gender as an issue to gain awareness about, we took a while to address gender issues in our interview. We began by talking about the gender -focused course. Following this, Samantha began to identify forums where women were demeaned (lines 118-120). The development of the narrative was chronologically parallel to Samantha's growing awareness of gender issues. She initiated discussion about the gender- focused course that confronted her with the oppression of women, and then moved on to the issues that stood out to her, particularly women and the media (line 120).

When Samantha did initiate a discussion about her realization that women were often portrayed in degrading ways by the media, I decided to stop her and asked her to tie this concern into her longstanding concerns about the lack of representation of different racial and ethnic groups. What stood out to me was the idea that she was aware of the lack of racial and ethnic diversity but was not attuned to the issues that faced women.

Samantha focused on the lack of racial representation in the media but was not particularly attuned to power dynamics inherent within this lack of representation by way of the media. The lack of attunement to power dynamics that have created the lack of representation, may have compromised Samantha's ability and/or willingness to recognize the degrading ways that women are portrayed.

Samantha noticed that friend's parent's relationships were constructed around traditional gender role expectations and this translated into the man being “the head of the household” (lines 172-173). Again during this context, I became more active in my encouragement of Samantha because I wanted her to flesh out the differences that she noticed (lines 169-173). My encouragement to give voice to this power dynamic may have been more necessary at these times because she was not used to thinking about power dynamics and gender, but was more used to thinking about power dynamics as they pertained to race. Instead, Samantha was used to seeing women like her mother, in a

position of power. Only after she fleshed out her exasperation about women being expected to provide care for children without help from their male partners, did Samantha begin to highlight the lack of choice available to women (lines 610-611).

Women's security

A theme that emerged for Samantha as she talked about employment issues was security and choice. Samantha repeatedly talked about the importance of women getting an education and achieving financial independence for the purpose of security in the event that they lost male partners due to accidents, divorce, "or something else" (lines 235, 251-252). This theme emerged most strongly when Samantha talked of her own experience growing up with a mother who sought education and a better job following the death of her husband (lines 225-228). Samantha linked her opinion to her experience with her mother, and her boyfriend.

Samantha talked of boyfriend's "traditional gender role views" as they differentiated from her own in respect to employment and childcare (363-364). She did not link their differences to the idea that each of them identified with their same sex parents. I interpreted this to mean that Samantha attributed this difference to gender role prescriptions and not to their experiences of growing up with parents who took on the financial responsibilities of their families without financial contribution from a spouse.

The different assumptions about gender roles emerged only when this issue was called into question when Samantha was attacked physically at work. This event led Samantha to question her current work environment, but not her career as a social worker. When this issue was called into question, the differences in gender role ideologies emerged, as her boyfriend conveyed that her job was "expendable" (line 349). She was further taken back when he dictated, rather than discussed, his expectation that Samantha would leave her career and take care of their children in the future (379-380). Samantha was not opposed to staying home and taking care of her children or leaving her current job, but was opposed to being expected to adopt this role without options or consideration of her goals (lines 282-288, & 298-305). Again Samantha's concerns were about security as she admitted that she would consider leaving her current job if she was married to her boyfriend and would not be left "hanging" if they broke up.

Despite her opposition to traditional gender role prescriptions, she went on to minimize her own goals in keeping with the idea that women's occupational and financial goals are secondary. Even though she talked about the fact that she had a "master's degree" that showed that she did not intend to "sit on her butt," (line 273) she went on to characterize her Master's in social work as a "masters in small wages." She characterized her impact in this role as "very small" (lines 356 & 360-361). Samantha also went on to justify her desire to be financially independent to pay off debts and "do things for [her]self/.../like my own goals" (lines 287-288), while emphasizing that her boyfriend would not even "consider not working" (lines 327-328). Samantha likened this difference in job considerations to differences in debt, but did not link this to general differences in gender role expectations.

I do think, however that the different gender role expectations played a large part in this disagreement. Samantha's justification for wanting independence suggested to me that she felt a need to justify her desire for choices and independence, whereas neither of us questioned her boyfriend's expectation to stay in the work force. The fact that we

explored childcare when talking about Samantha's gendered identity suggests that this is very much apart of Samantha's experience of being a woman even though Samantha does not yet have children. Childcare came up in the forms of women taking sole responsibility for children financially and other wise, to women's identity as women being called into question when they did not bear children (lines 527-537 & 639,691-696).

When we talked about these issues, particularly Samantha's disclosure about the way that her boyfriend presented his expectations, I expressed my outrage directly. I said that I could not believe that her boyfriend "said that to [her]" (line 266) and several times expressed disbelief and disapproval directly by saying "wow" after Samantha talked, particularly her job being viewed as "expendable" (line 350). I believe that this stance was not effective because it put Samantha in a position where she felt the need to keep justifying her preferences for choice and security (lines 377-393)

When I caught sight of this as a judgmental and possibly silencing discourse, I tried to be more supportive of Samantha's disapproval and dismay for being told what to do, while also calling attention to context that this issue was coming from, the project itself (line 394). Following this discussion, Samantha transitioned to the topic of "degrading" portrayals of women in particular music genres (lines 400-459). This discourse opened up into a discussion of historical ties to racism and the effects of oppression in African American culture.

Internalized oppression leads to putting African American women down.

Samantha did a nice job of linking oppressive depictions of women, particularly African American women, to slavery and the damaging effects of being put in a one down position. Samantha admitted that she "had thought about this" issue (line 473) and discussed this at length with her boyfriend. They linked historical depictions of Black men as "sexually hungry beasts that would rape a white woman" (lines 478-479), and Black women as "real sexual...in terms of you can just take advantage of them..." (lines 485-486) to Black men and women's current identification with this view (line 489). Samantha claimed that the current difference was that "it's not like the white people are thinking that about us, its like our own people are thinkin that about us" (lines 490-491).

Samantha and I linked this to a hierarchical model of power, where one group of people always needs to be put down for another group to feel powerful. In this context, Samantha and I agreed that the Black men seemed to be putting Black women down in an effort to feel "better" (lines 500-514). What we did not talk about was the idea that the Black men are living within a larger cultural context that continues to put them down. Samantha commented that "white people" were not looking at Black people in a sexualized or oppressive way but instead attributed this view to her "own people" (line 490), however, her awareness and heightened sensitivity to issues of race suggested otherwise (line 877).

Women as caretakers

Samantha took up a caretaking position with me throughout our work together. She was careful to ensure availability to me and was diligent about scheduling, finding a place for us to talk, and was willing to share very personal experiences with me for the sake of helping me out with my research (lines 672-684). Both of us have chosen a

profession where caring for other people is the focus, and have each faced consequences for this choice, such as Samantha's injury on the job and my need to finish my dissertation.

Samantha referenced childcare several times, which showed that this issue was closely tied with gender identity for her. In addition to referencing motherhood, she talked frequently of her respect for her mother's ability to care for she and her brother alone, and the choices that she made to ensure their future. Samantha referenced her mother as a role model of a "strong woman" who took on her responsibility to care for her children with no expectation of help. Samantha also talked of her concern for her mother and other women in similar situations who "have to do everything and then they don't even know if they're doing it right or what" (lines 598-599). Samantha was very careful not to become judgmental of others even though she could not envision making choices without first considering potential consequences (lines 655-664).

Samantha distanced herself from those who consider childbearing a prerequisite for qualifying as a woman. Thus, Samantha did not equate child-care as a woman's job or duty, but instead as a choice that was often left to women. In fact, Samantha commented several times that this issue never even occurred to her until she faced some medical issues of her own and then again confronted the topic when it came up in her gender focused course (line 706, 713-714, & 716-717). The fact that women "really" equated childbearing with womanhood was "amazing" to Samantha (lines 719-723). In connection to the assumption that this was not an issue that women of her age (at the time of the course) would identify with, she was not surprised that this topic did not generate much discussion (lines 733-735). She also assumed that she was the only one in class that this effected, until I pointed out that this may not be the case (lines 734 & 738). This helped Samantha see herself as "brave enough" to talk about this and assert "well it's who I am" (lines 741 & 743). By reflecting on this issue, Samantha acknowledged that this equation of women and motherhood fit with "traditional role" assumptions (lines 747-748).

Feminists as bra burners who want equality and freedom

Samantha did not identify herself as a feminist because she did not "form a definition of [feminism] for herself (line 916). Earlier in the interview, however, she defined her teacher's definition of feminism as concern for "the way women are perceived (line 88). Samantha's lack of identification with feminism seemed more linked to the stereotypes associated with feminism. Samantha was left with only the "stereotypical view of feminists as like these bra burning women running around and saying we're equal...we can do whatever we want but you know what I mean..." (lines 912-914). Samantha protested to identifying with this saying "like ..God..I was like I don't identify with that but then I...I don't have a definition for myself..." (line 914).

Samantha attributed gender and racial issues to historical premises, but tended to back away from insights that pointed to currently oppressive conditions. Even though she talked about feeling sensitive about racial prejudice she tended to attribute existing issues to those who were oppressed and did not talk about larger cultural mechanisms of oppression. She expressed surprise that "even like media-wise it seems like they try to /.../say like (illegitimate children) it's ok" (lines 622-624,& 634-635). Samantha did not

experience herself as oppressed and instead talked about her responsibility to make choices and suffer the consequences and benefits.

When we talked about infertility issues, particularly some people's equation of childbearing with womanhood, Samantha expressed utter disbelief that this was even considered. I took this opportunity to validate Samantha's ease with which she was able to dialogue about issues of marginalization including but not limited to gender (lines 753-758). Samantha acknowledged that "different things will spark" interest and that she "thought about issues" of oppression (lines 759-764). She also agreed that she took for granted her assumption that most people were open minded, and no longer ascribed to, or expected others to identify with traditional gender roles and other issues of marginalization such as race and class (lines 765-768 & 794-796). She even admitted that it made her angry when men were primarily in charge and in her words "you kinda look at the men as the ones who can do things a little bit better " and she admitted that she "didn't know why that [was]" (lines 864-873).

Again, Samantha showed her willingness to reflect on her own values and assumptions and call them into question. She was willing to admit that she did think about these issues and considered the possibility that oppressive dynamics continued to constrict our experiences as women. Samantha's strong belief about the value of open and multiple voices, in connection with her awareness that women and other marginalized groups continued to lack privileges, gave evidence that she could identify with feminist ideology if this ideology was more accessible or perhaps given more attention.

She even highlighted the loneliness of being in "[her] head...all the time" without having the chance to "hear somebody else and get feedback" (lines 948-950). I was happy to listen to Samantha's views about gender, race, class, religion and other issues, and she provided me with an opportunity to talk with someone who recognized different meanings and issues apparent within our current time and place, while still being hesitant to identify with feminism. I respected Samantha's candidness, and hope that our next interview will provide me with an opportunity to talk a little more about my definition of feminism and provide Samantha with an opportunity to define this label in a new way.

Reading for references to larger cultural contexts, including but not limited to connections and disconnections from feminist post-structural accounts.

First Interview with Participant Samantha: Reading 4.

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

Setting up the interview:

Samantha and I met after one cancellation and about three phone contacts. Samantha cancelled our first meeting because she was attacked by a patient, two hours before our scheduled meeting time. We preliminarily set another appointment for the week she returned from the vacation that had also been planned prior to the meeting and the attack. She expressed concern about this putting me behind schedule. Even though I was disappointed about not meeting with Samantha, I was happy to hear that she was ok and encouraged that she was still interested and had even anticipated setting another meeting. Samantha and I talked once after she returned from vacation and we set the initial meeting for the following day. Needless to say Samantha's reliability and dependability shone through, and eased my concerns about participants dropping out of the study prior to completion, or at least concerns about this participant.

Samantha explained that she was drawn to the poster about gender issues and initiated contact to begin the interview process. She told me over the phone that she had participated in research during her years in graduate school and liked to help those who did research. She also mentioned that she was interested in gender issues and was drawn to participating in a project that focused on them since participating in a gender focused course. Even before meeting it was clear that Samantha was someone who liked to care for others. It was also clear that participation in a gender-focused course provoked thought about her identification as female which fit with my choice to work with women who participated in a gender focused course.

We met at the end of Samantha's day of clinical work, at her job site. Samantha and I are both in the mental health field and shared the common goal of preferring clinical work to other options. We shared the context of graduate school and were similar in terms of age, Samantha is 27 years old and I am 29. These similarities helped to ease the dialogue between us and Samantha took an active role in the research soon after I introduced the topic and explained my feminist stance and agenda for the project. My clarification of my agenda was important because of my goal to disrupt the notion of researchers as objective, and to disrupt hierarchical notions that the participant should disclose while not being clear as to how their disclosures will be interpreted.

After the initial questions about identifying information and setting the stage for discussion by asking for information about her gender focused course and experiences with gender issues, Samantha took initiative and addressed issues of gender, race, religion, and her ideology about marginalization. Throughout most of the interview my participation was limited to um hm's and questions to encourage Samantha to elaborate on her experiences. Samantha's pace throughout the interview was quick and she rarely paused or needed much by way of direction or prompting. At the end of the interview Samantha reported that she enjoyed being able to express her views in an open forum.

Samantha's process throughout the interview moved from personal to cultural perspectives and back again. Just as this shift would suggest, Samantha is someone who strives to change her behavior in accordance with her ideology as it develops. Samantha's moves from personal to ideological issues also showed the complexity of the issue of gender identification and lent support to my objective to showcase the multiplicity of women's voices.

Even though Samantha did not identify as a feminist, she was aware of the differentiation between expectations for women and men, and those of different racial identifications. She was someone who evaluated decisions about her spending practices and relationships on the ideologies and issues that she felt strongly about, while maintaining a non-judgmental stance that provided room for further change. This openness to other's opinions was apparent in the study by way of direct disclosures and her willingness to reserve judgement about me and my agenda even though she did not identify with this agenda herself.

Passion for exploring ideas and issues.

Samantha called attention to the idea the her gender focused course covered "as many areas as we/ .../as we could ...in the short time in the semester" (lines 54-57). The emphasis on "short time" suggested that she felt there was more to discuss, while also showing her desire to do more.

Even though Samantha was concerned about race and religion and had pursued classes in each, she did not explore or think about gender being a mark of oppression until she went to college. She took this course because she had not taken any previous courses in gender studies and because she liked the idea that it was small in terms of class size (lines 59 & 67).

The idea that Samantha pursued a gender focused course largely because she had not taken one before and had not identified gender as an issue, showcased the apathy that surrounds gender and the covering over of gender as a mark of oppression. This was evident in the case of Samantha because she was someone who was interested in issues of oppression and still overlooked gender. This fit with the generally accepted dialogue about gender as an issue that is biologically dictated and therefore unchangeable instead of an issue of oppression. As such, attention is focused on roots of difference rather than oppression.

Levi-Strauss's (1969) discussion of functional gender role differences supported the notion that gender differences are necessary and fundamental to the survival of human society. As such, the issue of gender oppression is covered over and in effect gets pushed to the wayside when we conceptualize marks of oppression. In other words, whereas race is demarcated as a mark of oppression because the function of differentiation amongst different racial group has no function other than to keep various groups from gaining power, the function of gender roles seems to take on a more useful and static conceptualization. Women as caretakers, the gender that bears children and gains status through roles of wife and mother serves a necessary purpose. What is not immediately obvious in this conceptualization is the fact that women are denied power in forums based on this difference. Women are seen as less than.

In this society we can not imagine being distanced from gender differentiation, though some of us are able to conceptualize the ridiculousness and dangers inherent to

racial prejudice. In accordance with Rubin's (1997) critique, to not identify gender as a mark of oppression and instead to assume that it is natural and necessary, promotes apathy about gender issues and covers over the importance of resisting the limits placed upon this. This is dangerous because we internalize limits placed upon our gendered identification and in the case of women accept oppression. My interpretation of Samantha's identification with issues of racial oppression and not gender was that she was not aware that gender could be identified as an issue of oppression. She explained several times that she was not "socialized that way" and assumed that all women were able to make choices as did her mother (line 167). Later on however, it became clear that Samantha did see gender as a mitigating factor of oppression when she spoke of women being equated with child care and assumed to be less than men.

Samantha appreciated the research interview because she liked the "open forum to discuss her ideas" and because she wanted to "see how somebody else thinks" (line 944). Even though Samantha did not identify as a feminist, her appreciation of open forums and open mindedness was clear and reminded me of Irigaray's (1985) promotion of open forums for women to speak and be heard multiply.

Parallel Process: Gender as secondary.

Just as it took a while for Samantha to identify gender as an issue of oppression, we took a while to address gender issues in our interview. We began by talking about the gender -focused course. Following this, Samantha began to identify forums where women were demeaned (lines 118-120). The development of the narrative was chronologically parallel to Samantha's growing awareness of gender issues. She initiated discussion about the gender- focused course, which she attributed to her own awareness of gender as a mark of oppression.

When Samantha did initiate a discussion about her realization that women were often portrayed in degrading ways by the media, I decided to stop her and asked her to tie this concern into her longstanding concerns about the lack of representation of different racial and ethnic groups. What stood out to me was the idea that she was aware of the lack of racial and ethnic diversity but was not attuned to the issues that faced women.

Samantha focused on the lack of racial representation in the media but was not particularly attuned to power dynamics inherent within this lack of representation by way of the media. The lack of attunement to power dynamics that have created the lack of representation, may have compromised Samantha's ability, and/or willingness to, recognize the degrading ways that women are portrayed. This lack of attunement to power dynamics fits within the patriarchal culture that we live in as it has successfully covered over the power dynamics at work within oppression.

Some feminist post-structuralists have argued that oppression lies at the very root of distinguishing between genders and have focused on power dynamics instead of issues of causality. They contend that categorization of people implies comparison and subsequent domination of one group over another. This can be applied to gender, while also applying to race, class, and any other categorization system. Samantha's questions about the groups that people formed in her cafeteria along lines of race, religion or any other mark of difference in the absence of overt pressure may be looked at as a means of identifying with the categories. This identification can be positive in terms of lending a sense of unity and connection to others. But it can also be seen as a sign that there is a

need to unify because of oppression and prejudice. By focusing on biological givens and naturalistic distinctions for any type of oppression whether it be race, gender or religion, we become focused on reasons for the initial demarcation of oppression and become stuck and self blaming about being different and therefore deserving of prejudice.

Rubin (1997) and Wittig (1997) called for a new conceptualization of gender as it relates to oppressive dynamics and subsequent effects instead of biological roots. In doing so, the possibility of recognizing the damage that we have all suffered by one mark or another, we begin to become aware of our oppression. As such, the very possibility of resistance becomes possible (Wittig, 1997, p. 270).

With encouragement from me to flesh out her point of view, Samantha was able to conceptualize the differences in gender role expectations in terms of power dynamics instead of biological roots. She noticed that friend's parent's relationships were constructed around traditional gender role expectations and this translated into the man being "the head of the household" (lines 172-173). I became more active in my encouragement of Samantha because I wanted her to flesh out the differences that she noticed (lines 169-173). My encouragement to give voice to this power dynamic may have been more necessary at these times because she was not used to thinking about power dynamics and gender, but was more used to thinking about power dynamics as they pertained to race. Samantha was used to seeing women, like her mother, in a position of power but was not used to seeing women take on a one down position and this bothered her. Only after she fleshed out her exasperation about women being expected to provide care for children without help from their male partners, did Samantha begin to highlight the lack of choices available to women (lines 610-611).

Gender as choice instead of givens.

A theme that emerged for Samantha as she talked about employment issues was security and choice. Samantha repeatedly talked about the importance of women getting an education and achieving financial independence for the purpose of security in the event that they lost male partners due to accidents, divorce, "or something else" (lines 235, 251-252). This theme emerged most strongly when Samantha talked of her own experience growing up with a mother who sought education and a better job following the death of her husband (lines 225-228). Samantha linked her opinion to her experience with her mother, and her boyfriend.

Samantha talked of her boyfriend's "traditional gender role views" as they differentiated from her own, in respect to employment and childcare (363-364). She did not link their differences to the idea that each of them identified with their same sex parents. I interpreted this to mean that Samantha attributed this difference to gender role prescriptions and not to their experiences of growing up with parents who took on the financial responsibilities of their families without financial contribution from a spouse.

As someone who did not conceptualize herself as oppressed by gender, Samantha conceptualized her role as a woman to be dictated by choices that she made. As such, Samantha took responsibility for her life and saw options as the means to her own security.

This became thematic in her relationship with her boyfriend when different assumptions about gender roles emerged when Samantha was attacked physically at work. Prior to this, gender role expectations were unspoken and assumed between she

and her partner. This assumption highlights the shared context of she and her boyfriend, the idea that we have grown up with the same gendered prescriptions, and general cultural understanding. This example, however, also points to the idea that this context is not shared wholeheartedly, and instead we live out narratives as prescribed by culture but only in so far as these are supported and prescribed by those around us, and in so far as we each take them up. This is in keeping with Lacan's (1949/1996) formulation of identity, where the child's realization of his/her ego/identity is mediated by others, since those who mark the child signify how she is to be treated.

Integrating choice into the conceptualization of gender roles provided Samantha with a different conceptualization of herself as a woman than that of her boyfriend. Samantha's boyfriend, on the other hand, conceptualized gender roles as static, with women bearing children and taking on the primary role of homemaker while the financial future was the male's domain (lines 379-380). This was modeled to each of them as they grew up watching their same sex parent take up gender roles in this way. Samantha was not opposed to staying home and taking care of her children or leaving her current job, but was opposed to being expected to adopt this role without options or consideration of her goals (lines 282-288, & 298-305).

To go further with this conceptualization of modeling and taking up gender identification, Butler's (1997) conceptualized gender as a series of incorporations of significant others into our ego. She focused on our need to separate ourselves from these others because of demands made by our shared Western cultural context. Because this cultural context currently demands renunciation of homosexual attachments, we are forced to separate ourselves from same-gendered others. In order to avoid this loss, we internalize aspects of this other that support our ego and grant us gendered identity. This identification with gendered identity is currently experienced as a necessity because it gives us a place from which to become a part of a culture that differentiates along male and female gendered lines.

Connecting this theory to Samantha and her boyfriend's narratives helps me to clarify the link between traditional gender role expectations and new conceptualizations of gender as performative and changing. In the case of Samantha, the gender role ideology that she subscribed to was not immediately linked to biology, or any other static concept. It was however, linked to security and a desire to have choices and work towards occupational and personal goals, such as her relationship with her boyfriend. In an effort to preserve security, and not subscribe completely to gender as arbitrary, Samantha backed off from this stance and rejected her choices as arbitrary. I do think that Samantha's rejection of feminism was linked to the freedom that she believed the feminists advocated for and which she in turn did not identify with. As Butler (1997) reminded us, this freedom is experienced as a threat because it threatens us with the loss of an identity that currently defines us in the world (pp. 135-137). In order to avoid this loss, Samantha still held onto identification as a woman with particular and somewhat limited scope of possibilities.

Butler (1997) also talked about the threats to gender that are inherent within threats to heterosexuality (pp. 135-136). As previously discussed, gender can be conceptualized as a series of incorporations and identifications about gender and how we take this up. If we think about gender roles that we have grown up with, however a very clear differentiation between women's roles and men's roles in heterosexual relationships

has been modeled and portrayed in endless incantations. As such, it is much more difficult to negotiate different ways to juggle new kinds of roles and expectations if we do not simply reiterate these roles and instead call them into question. Just as Samantha pointed to, discussion is necessary if we are to work through issues and negotiate our goals and identifications with another person. Instead of taking this for granted, as Samantha and her boyfriend did initially, we must work to redefine relationships and expectations. This does pose a threat to heterosexuality as gender becomes less fixed and is no longer identified by virtue of any one marker.

Even though heterosexuality was not threatened by Samantha's relationship with her boyfriend, traditional gender role ideologies and subsequent gender identifications were, since Samantha was not willing to assume the role of wife and mother without discussion. Differences in gender role ideology led to a disruption in the harmony of the relationship while also disrupting the assumption that being a woman or a man, necessarily, meant something outside of context. Samantha's boyfriend's assumption of traditional gender roles was dependent upon Samantha's willingness to concede to what has traditionally been considered feminine-motherhood. Simultaneously, Samantha's belief that her boyfriend would not consider not working and being supported by her, also called attention to our shared expectations that men do not have a choice whether or not to work, but assume women do. What was not recognized is the idea that along with this so-called choice came, oppressive loss of security as Samantha viewed it.

Despite her opposition to traditional gender role prescriptions, she went on to minimize her own goals in keeping with the idea that women's occupational and financial goals are secondary. While she talked about the fact that she had a "master's degree" that showed that she did not intend to "sit on her butt," (line 273) she went on to characterize this as a "masters in small wages," and characterized her impact in this role as "very small" (lines 356 & 360-361). Samantha also went on to justify her desire to be financially independent to pay off debts and "do things for [her]self...like my own goals" (lines 287-288), while emphasizing that her boyfriend would not even "consider not working" (lines 327-328). Samantha likened this difference in job considerations to differences in debt, but did not link this to general differences in gender role expectations.

I do think, however that the different gender role expectations played a large part in this disagreement. Samantha's justification for wanting independence suggested to me that she felt a need to justify her desire for choices and independence, whereas neither of us questioned her boyfriend's expectation to stay in the work force. The fact that we explored childcare when talking about Samantha's gendered identity suggests that this is very much apart of Samantha's experience of being a woman even though Samantha does not yet have children. Childcare came up in the forms of women taking sole responsibility for children financially and other wise, to women's identity as women being called into question when they did not bear children (lines 527-537 & 639,691-696).

When we talked about these issues, particularly Samantha's disclosure about the way that her boyfriend presented his expectations, I expressed my outrage directly. I said that I could not believe that her boyfriend "said that to [her]" (line 266) and several times expressed disbelief and disapproval directly by saying "wow" after Samantha talked, particularly her job being viewed as "expendable" (line 350). I believe that this stance

was not effective because it put Samantha in a position where she felt the need to keep justifying her preferences for choice and security (lines 377-393)

When I caught sight of this as a judgmental and possibly silencing discourse, I tried to be more supportive of Samantha's disapproval and dismay for being told what to do, while also calling attention to context that this issue was coming from, the project itself (line 394). Following this discussion, Samantha transitioned to the topic of "degrading" portrayals of women in particular music genres (lines 400-459). This discourse opened up into a discussion of historical ties to racism and the effects of oppression in African American culture.

Hierarchical oppression necessitates that one group must be placed below another.

Samantha did a nice job of linking oppressive depictions of women, particularly African American women, to slavery and the damaging effects of being put in a one down position. Samantha admitted that she "had thought about this" issue (line 473) and discussed this at length with her boyfriend. They linked historical depictions of Black men as "sexually hungry beasts that would rape a white woman" (lines 478-479), and Black women as "real sexual...in terms of you can just take advantage of them..." (lines 485-486) to Black men and women's current identification with this view (line 489). Samantha claimed that the current difference was that "it's not like the white people are thinking that about us, its like our own people are thinkin that about us" (lines 490-491). Samantha and I linked this to a hierarchical model of power, where one group of people always needs to be put down for another group to feel powerful. This fit with Rubin (1997) and Wittig's (1997) theory that oppression lies at the very root of distinguishing between genders, or in this context race, because the distinction serves to differentiate and pose one group above another. In this context, Samantha and I agreed that the Black men seemed to be putting Black women down in an effort to feel "better" (lines 500-514).

Irigaray (1985) pointed out that the patriarchal order "produced" woman as a lack because she is dependent upon man to define her (p. 26). As the gender that is oppressed, women gain a sense of worth only in so far as the men around her grant her this privilege. According to Samantha, the African American culture (and I would include Western culture as a whole) looked at the illegitimate children phenomenon as a "good thing" (lines 525-527). In other words, women are seen as dispensable, as places for men to "spread their seed" (lines 575-576). As such, women accept their lowered status, and begin to internalize it. Women, African American or otherwise, take on the role of "relinquishing their bodies to [men] in an effort to compensate for not being men (Irigaray, 1985, p. 26). The women that Samantha referenced, both the rappers who promote themselves as the "biggest whores in the world" and the babymama's who "just don't care" lend support for this theory (lines 468-470 & 666-667).

What we did not talk about was the idea that the Black men are living within a larger cultural context that continues to put them down. Samantha commented that "white people" were not looking at Black people in a sexualized or oppressive way but instead attributed this view to her "own people" (line 490), however, her awareness and heightened sensitivity to issues of race suggested otherwise (line 877).

Women as caretakers

Samantha took up a caretaking position with me throughout our work together. She was careful to ensure availability to me and was diligent about scheduling, finding a place for us to talk, and was willing to share very personal experiences with me for the sake of helping me out with my research (lines 672-684). Both of us have chosen a profession where caring for other people is the focus, and have each faced consequences for this choice, such as Samantha's injury on the job and my need to finish my dissertation.

Samantha referenced childcare several times, which showed that this issue was closely tied with gender identity for her. In addition to referencing motherhood, she talked frequently of her respect for her mother's ability to care for she and her brother alone, and the choices that she made to ensure their future. Samantha referenced her mother as a role model of a "strong woman" who took on her responsibility to care for her children with no expectation of help. Samantha also talked of her concern for her mother and other women in similar situations who "have to do everything and then they don't even know if they're doing it right or what" (lines 598-599). This reminded me of Irigaray's (1985) claim that women are mimicking a "language they have not produced" (p. 189). In other words, women's subjectivity or identity is not recognized because they have not been granted the right to speak about or conceptualize their roles apart from the patriarchal cultural milieu. Women's desire is inarticulable in this cultural construction and therefore remains unconscious even to women themselves. Samantha highlighted the idea that women are assumed to have the role of caretaker and often no other options are available even though they did not create the baby alone. As the biological bearers of children, we are left with few options and are stigmatized if we do not comply with this expectation.

Samantha distanced herself from those who considered childbearing a prerequisite for qualifying as a woman. Thus, Samantha did not equate childbearing with woman's identity but instead posed the role of mother as a choice that was often assumed to be the destiny of women. In this way, Samantha contested biological links that equated women with child bearing. Just as Samantha pointed out, there are many ways to care for children and adopt the role of "mother" that exist outside of pregnancy. By calling attention to choice, and liberating women from an assumed biological destiny, gender is being called into question as a biological given. If women and men could be liberated from their biological destinies, gendered categories could be called into question for all of us, and oppressive differentiation could be disrupted and perhaps even eradicated altogether. Samantha's recognition of the oppressive links to biology provided a link to Butler's (1990) theory of gender as performance. Butler (1990) argued for a liberation of gender and other seemingly biologically linked markers, to reconfigure identity as "effect" (p. 147). In other words, gendered identity would no longer be seen as a given, nor would it be seen as completely arbitrary. Instead, identity would exist in so far as it was participated in, repeated, and thus lent itself to critique and change (p. 147). Both women and men would be liberated from constricted prescriptions that kept them from making choices that fit with individual identities.

In fact, Samantha commented several times that the equation of women with childbearing never even occurred to her until she faced some medical issues of her own, and then again confronted the topic when it came up in her gender focused course

(line 706, 713-714, & 716-717). The fact that women “really” equated childbearing with womanhood was “amazing” to Samantha (lines 719-723). In connection to the assumption that this was not an issue that women of her age (at the time of the course) would identify with, she was not surprised that this topic did not generate much discussion (lines 733-735). She also assumed that she was the only one in class that this effected, until I pointed out that this may not be the case (lines 734 & 738). This helped Samantha see herself as “brave enough” to talk about this and assert “well it’s who I am” (lines 741 & 743). By reflecting on this issue, Samantha acknowledged that this equation of women and motherhood fit with “traditional role” assumptions and did not necessarily fit with her own self image (lines 747-748). It also helped her to see herself as someone who was much more aware and willing to give voice to alternative views of gender.

Feminists as bra burners who want equality and freedom

Samantha did not identify herself as a feminist because she did not “form a definition of [feminism] for herself (line 916). Earlier in the interview, however, she defined her teacher’s definition of feminism as concern for “the way women are perceived (line 88), which was the same issue that Samantha identified as problematic for women. Samantha’s lack of identification with feminism seemed more linked to the stereotypes associated with feminism. According to Williams and Wittig, (1997), most women do not endorse feminism because of the stigma attached to feminist identification. They argued that this often stemmed from a lack of information and a preponderance of misinformation. I would argue that the apathy and lack of information about feminism comes from the successful covering over of anything that threatens the current power structure. Feminist literature has thoroughly argued that women’s historical absence from cultural representation has resulted in an oppressed position, making it difficult for women to begin to re-appropriate their position (Rich, 1979, p. 53).

Samantha was left with only the “stereotypical view of feminists as like these bra burning women running around and saying we’re equal...we can do whatever we want but you know what I mean/.../” (lines 912-914). In Samantha’s words, “like/ .../God..I was like I don’t identify with that but then I...I don’t have a definition for myself/.../” (line 914). The bra burners running around may not be closely linked to Samantha’s experience, but the desire to make choices and demand the right to do so did fit with Samantha’s discussion during the first interview.

Samantha attributed gender and racial issues to historical premises, but tended to back away from insights that pointed to currently oppressive conditions. Even though she talked about feeling sensitive about racial prejudice she tended to attribute existing issues to those who were oppressed and did not talk about larger cultural mechanisms of oppression. She expressed surprise that “even like media-wise it seems like they try to say like (illegitimate children) it’s ok” (lines 622-624, & 634-635). Samantha did not experience herself as oppressed and instead talked about her responsibility to make choices and suffer the consequences and benefits.

When we talked about infertility issues, particularly some people’s equation of childbearing with womanhood, Samantha expressed utter disbelief that this was even considered. I took this opportunity to validate Samantha’s ease with which she was able to dialogue about issues of marginalization including but not limited to gender (lines 753-758). Samantha acknowledged that “different things will spark” interest and that she

“thought about issues” of oppression (lines 759-764). She also agreed that she took for granted her assumption that most people were open minded, and no longer ascribed to, or expected others to identify with traditional gender roles and other issues of marginalization such as race and class (lines 765-768 & 794-796). She even admitted that it made her angry when men were primarily in charge and in her words “you kinda look at the men as the ones who can do things a little bit better “ and she admitted that she “didn’t know why that [was]” (lines 864-873).

Samantha’s ambivalence about seeing herself, and other marginalized groups, as oppressed was clear. This ambivalence on the part of Samantha seemed to stem from her strong belief in taking responsibility for her actions. She had a much more difficult time maintaining a stance on gendered oppression than she did with race, but even then she tended to back away from implicating cultural dynamics outside of herself. This difficulty locating oppressive dynamics seemed to me to emanate from the larger cultural context that keeps it hidden. According to Irigaray (1985), the discourse of patriarchy is “always a project of diversion, deflection, and reduction of the other into the Same” (p. 74).

Irigaray (1985) argued that multiplicity and ambiguity threatened the current linearity of patriarchy. Samantha’s willingness to reflect on her own values and assumptions and call them into question showed that she was willing to consider the ambiguity of our identification as women, and in Samantha’s case an African American woman. She was willing to admit that she thought about issues of oppression occasionally and occasionally considered the possibility that oppressive dynamics continued to constrict our experiences as women. Samantha’s strong belief about the value of open and multiple voices, in connection with her awareness that women and other marginalized groups continued to lack privileges, gave evidence that she could identify with feminist ideology if this ideology was more accessible or perhaps given more attention. Samantha’s pull towards multiplicity and giving voice to different points of view parallels my desire to turn to Irigaray to draw connections to Samantha’s narrative.

Samantha even highlighted the loneliness of being in “[her] head...all the time” without having the chance to “hear somebody else and get feedback” (lines 948-950). I was happy to listen to Samantha’s views about gender, race, class, religion and other issues. Samantha’s willingness to participate helped me to form a bond with another woman and confront our differences and strengths (hooks, 1984). Samantha provided me with an opportunity to talk with someone who recognized different meanings and issues apparent within our current time and place, while still being hesitant to identify with feminism. In this way I was confronted with a different point of view from that of my own. I respected Samantha’s candidness, and hope that our next interview will provide me with an opportunity to talk a little more about my definition of feminism and provide Samantha with an opportunity to define this label in a new way. Although I do not want to pressure or reduce Samantha’s hesitance to identify with feminism as a mis-reading of the culture, instead I hope to provoke more confrontation and reflection about this issue for both of us. In this way, I hope that this direct communication can liberate us from a static dialogue and instead share more of ourselves and unique knowledge in a way that confirms, generates and makes explicit our own values (hooks, 1984 & Spender, 1980).

Reading for the voice of hierarchy: evaluating the totalizing claims of the study.

First interview with Participant Samantha: Reading 5.

Key: Bold script was used to highlight main issues.

The following questions were posed originally by Lather (1991) and were used to evaluate the degree to which I was able to replicate tenets posed by feminist post-structuralist research (p. 84). This evaluation was done prior to meeting with Samantha for the second interview.

1. Did I encourage ambivalence, ambiguity and multiplicity, or did I impose order and structure?

I imposed some structure to the interview by having a feminist agenda and seeking narratives of oppression. I was less structured with Samantha than in Ann's because of the confidence I gained with the first interview. Samantha talked about narratives of oppression but did not identify herself as oppressed nor did she consider herself a feminist. As such, I believe that I may have silenced some of her opposing views by virtue of my agenda to prioritize oppressive aspects of gender.

2. What elements of legislation and prescription underlie my efforts?

The goal of my research was to valorize women's experience in accordance with feminist post-structural theory. I also wanted to situate feminist post-structural abstractions in lived experience in an effort to discover places where strategies of resistance could be articulated. I also wanted to evoke thought and new understandings of feminism even to those who did not necessarily see themselves as feminist.

Samantha did not align herself with the feminist agenda because she felt she did not have enough information to make an informed decision about this identity. I felt drawn to provide Samantha with knowledge about this designation in an effort to at least help her to become more informed. Even though I was not necessarily explicit about this agenda during the first interview I did include this in her individualized narrative and have ensured that she will have the chance to respond to this when we meet the second time.

3. Did I create a text that was multiple without being paralyzed?

Samantha's stories highlighted her awareness of oppressive dynamics that she tended to back away from. I also believe that Samantha's account would look like that of many women who notice issues of oppression but remain hesitant to identify with feminist perspectives. I also think Samantha's narrative highlighted the connection between feminist post-structural insights and lived experience. In addition, our dialogue also provided a forum for discussion and subsequent connection among two women.

4. Have I questioned the textual staging of knowledge in a way that keeps my own authority from being reified?

I have tried to do this by documenting my motivations, catching site of decisions that I made to alter particular conversational shifts, and attending to choices that I made while interpreting text.

I was also careful to explain my feminist agenda to Samantha, but I did not address how this agenda would explicitly influence my interpretations of her narratives. An example of when this may have been problematic was when I was not convinced that her hesitance about this identification was due to a lack of a “definition.” I interpreted Samantha’s claim as a contradiction to other issues that she raised. What I did not interpret was my desire or ability to silence a stance that was in opposition to my own. In this way I was playing into a totalizing discourse that covered over my potential to oppress.

5. Who are my ‘Others’?

Samantha was the primary “Other.” She is an African American woman who identified racial oppression as an issue of sensitivity due to her experience as a racial minority. Samantha attributed her lack of identification with gender oppression to strong women role models. I felt a collegial atmosphere during our meeting.

Another primary “Other” is myself as both part of the text and outside of the text as an interpreter within a different context.

Another “Other” in this study is the theoretical work that I have used to elucidate Samantha’s narratives.

Another “Other” in the study is the audience that will take up this study and determine the value.

6. What binaries structured my arguments?

The binary of gender structured my argument by virtue of using this mark as a way to separate those who I did not solicit for participation and those that were solicited.

The binary of researcher and researched structured the interaction since I was the one who ultimately made decisions to encourage or discourage various stories while Samantha felt pressure to provide something that I wanted.

7. Did my work multiply political spaces and prevent the concentration of power in any one point?

I believe that this work did provide a political space by virtue of valorizing Samantha’s voice and calling attention to means of political activism through dialogue. I believe that Samantha and I achieved a bond between each other that allowed each of us to feel respected and respectful of the other person. Samantha initiated topics and generally took the lead in terms of direction of

the narrative, while I asserted my agenda for understanding her perspective by encouraging her to elaborate on her thought process. Power was implicitly multiple since my power was dependent upon the participants' willingness to participate.

8. Did it go beyond critique to help in producing plural and diverse spaces for the emergence of subjugated knowledge and for the organization of resistance?

I believe that the project itself stands as a testament to dialogue and the importance of accounting for the complexity of oppression. I also believe that the pedagogical aspects of this project will become more of a focal point throughout the stages of the research. The pedagogical aspects of this study could also be conceptualized as a strategy of resistance for future research.

‘Ann’s’ Individualized Account

I. Setting the stage

A. Contextualizing the narrative that emerged

Ann identified as a 45 year old social worker, who saw herself as Caucasian and Italian, a non-practicing spiritual person who was raised Catholic and later identified herself as a lesbian woman in a committed relationship. I was 29 years old, nearing the end of my fifth year as a doctorate student in clinical psychology, worked as a therapist, and identified as a Caucasian, relatively spiritual, sometimes practicing Jew, straight and married woman. Ann became aware of the project by reading a poster that was hung at her work site by a friend of mine who agreed to help to post flyers. Ann and I met after three attempts on each of our parts to set up the first interview by phone. Ann and I met twice at the mental health facility that she worked in, at the end of her day at work. Both times the interviews took place in conference rooms, and each session lasted approximately an hour and a half. Our third and final contact occurred over the phone, and lasted approximately half an hour.

Following each of the interviews I was left with a feeling of inspiration for the project and a feeling of connection with Ann. Ann was the first participant that I interviewed and throughout the interviews it was clear that her views were similar to my own. I believe that this influenced my interview style, as I felt comfortable asking Ann direct questions, and she felt comfortable offering direct feedback even when it was not in agreement with my own.

As the narrative unfolded during our first interview, I was encouraged about the project’s aims because Ann connected gender identification with in her words “just about

everything in life.” Ann voiced many experiences in which she felt she was oppressed by gender and added examples where race, sexual identification, and class oppression also intersected. At the end of all three interviews, Ann commented that she felt she was a part of an act of resistance by way of participating in the project. In this way, Ann’s narrative fit easily and explicitly with the goals of my project.

Our comfort increased during our second and third interviews as she fleshed out stories that she told the first time and added points for clarification. The fact that Ann was also comfortable questioning my interpretations from the first interview suggested to me that my method did not silence her and helped her to feel empowered and important in the shaping of her voice. This fit the aim of my project since I had hoped that participants would feel comfortable enough to disagree with my interpretations if they did not fit with the way that they wished to be heard.

Ann’s interest in the project stemmed from her longstanding interest in gender issues and her desire to do something to participate in acts of resistance against oppression. Ann’s voice provided an illustration of gender oppression that spanned from childhood to current ways in which this oppression continues to plague women, especially those whose race, and sexual identification does not fit with the patriarchal valorization of straight, white, male identifications. This led to a rich dialogue and subsequent analysis that easily connected to the feminist post-structural principles that I aimed to flesh out.

B. Power dynamics that emerged throughout the project:

We began all three of the interviews with me clearly taking the lead because of the impetus of explaining the purpose of the meetings. During the first interview this

took shape by me being directive about questions, with the assumption that Ann should respond. I imposed structure to the interview by having a feminist agenda and seeking narratives of oppression, particularly those faced by women in a patriarchal culture. I explained the process of participation and was careful to explain that she would see the “results” of the analysis as it was composed and would have the opportunity to give feedback and make corrections. I also disclosed my feminist agenda in an effort to provide Ann with the context from which I intended to interpret our dialogue. I posed the initial question about gender in a somewhat open -ended way by encouraging Ann to feel free to share anything that came to mind.

During our second interview, I took the lead as I requested that Ann read the individual narrative that I had composed based on our first interview. I encouraged her to either write out or tell me of issues that arose as she read. I explained that I wanted her to feel comfortable with the narrative and thus wanted her to ask questions for clarification, disagreement, or any other feedback.

Even though the second and third interviews were less structured and more dependent upon Ann’s willingness to assert her opinions during the interaction, I still held on to the ability to shape the interaction according to my agenda. Because my agenda was to encourage Ann to give voice to her assertions, I believed that validation was the most important feedback that I could offer. In spite of my attempts to provide validation, power dynamics remained as she frequently expressed concern about the usefulness and relevance of her added narratives. Because I was in the role of researcher both Ann and I recognized that I was in the position to authorize Ann’s disclosures.

In spite of my attempts to disrupt (not hide or eradicate) traditional power dynamics between the researcher and the researched, Ann admitted at the end of our first interview that she felt vulnerable in her role as participant. This is an important context from which to interpret the rest of our interaction as it emerged because Ann took a risk by sharing so much personal information with me and trusting my word even though she did not know me. Even though Ann had the ability to change information that she was uncomfortable with, a level of trust was still necessary as she did not see the entirety of the project and would only be able to do so after it was completed. The parallel process of being in a vulnerable position in a research project, mimicked Ann's experience of being in a vulnerable role as a lesbian woman with darker skin who came from a lower income neighborhood while growing up in a patriarchal culture.

Ann adopted a subordinate position within the first interview and answered questions without questioning me. However, during the second interview Ann was visibly more empowered and put me to the task of explaining how I arrived at my interpretations. For example, during the first interview, Ann frequently referenced age throughout the dialogue. During the second interview, however, Ann questioned my interpretation that she saw herself as old. She explained that she felt quite the contrary, and often felt that she was "immature." I made reference to the transcript where she mentioned her age several times, especially as she recounted stories of her childhood and called upon historical references about women. She laughed and acknowledged that this did make her feel like an "old historian" because she was surprised about the amount of time and the number of incidents that had happened in her life.

C. Changes in comfort level: moving closer and getting personal

Because Ann aligned herself with feminist agendas, I found myself wanting to validate her experiences and adopted a supportive role during our first and second interviews. I also experienced the interviews as collegial and had an easy time in my role as researcher because Ann initiated topics that I would have had to bring up with someone who did not consider themselves a feminist. The shared alignment with feminism and the mental health field helped Ann and I find a common language. The shared contexts were particularly useful when it came to understanding and discussing the theories that I had used to shape Ann's narrative. Ann found these theories useful and commented on the ways they fit with her own experiences. As such, my concern that these theories may subtract from the validity of Ann's voice, or that Ann would find the theories too abstract or off base was unfounded at least in the case of Ann.

During our second interaction, I was less concerned about disclosing my points of view because I did not feel that this would change Ann's willingness to share her ideas, but would help strengthen our connection. I had already formed an image of Ann as an assertive woman who was not easily silenced by others, in large part because she was willing to take risks when she felt this was happening. In particular, I believed that Ann was ambivalent about the roots of gender differences, and hoped that discussion about post-structural theory would help her to question the assumption that there are biological differences. As a fellow feminist, I felt that this information was relevant and would encourage Ann to think of gendered markings in a different way.

Our second interview also felt more intimate, as Ann shared personal stories that she said she rarely told other people. Ann acknowledged that she had become

increasingly comfortable talking about painful family memories since being in therapy. She also admitted that she felt more comfortable adding to the stories from the first interview because she felt more comfortable with me. She explained that these disclosures were important in this context because these experiences were marked with oppression because of gender.

Ann's identification of this project as a means of resisting oppression helped me to reconsider my protective stance of her personal narratives. During our second interview I expressed concern that Ann revealed more than was necessary to illustrate the points that I was making with the project. Despite her denial of concern about including stories about her family, I told Ann that I might not include all of the stories because I did not want to make her feel vulnerable. I changed my mind as I listened to our tape after the interview. I reminded myself that my goal was to showcase women's voices in the way that they wanted to be heard and Ann's decision to share family stories was the way that she chose to shape her narrative. I decided to trust that she would tell me if she did not want something included, and felt comforted by the idea that she would have this chance during our third contact.

Previous encouragement and validation seemed to be effective, because Ann was willing to assert clarifications of her account during the third interview. Though she continued to denigrate her clarifications by questioning their relevance, she was willing to point out places where I had made mistakes about her history. Ann's willingness to stay involved, and decision to review the narrative a second time before discussing issues also suggested that Ann was clear in her role. As such, this comment highlighted that she was aware of my authority in the project, while it also suggested that she felt pride for her

participation and wanted in her words to give the narrative a “thorough read because this is what it deserved.”

Ann and I were also able to review the inclusion of her personal family history. I reminded Ann that during the second interview I was unsure if I would include all of this information because I did not want to make her feel more vulnerable than was necessary. Ann dismissed my concern about this and we spoke about her decision to include these stories because they felt important. I also disclosed that after listening to the tape of the second interview, I felt that my concern was a sign that I did not listen to her attempts to tell me that she was comfortable with the disclosure and had wanted to have the information included.

II. Narratives of oppression

A. Growing up different

Ann traced her life through stories of gender oppression from childhood through to her current life as a Master’s level social worker. I felt more impressed than Ann seemed to be, with her willingness to take action against gender and other forms of oppression. Ann’s nonchalance about her experiences of oppression and activism gave way during our second and third interviews. She clarified during our second meeting that her nonchalant, sarcastic tone helped her to not take herself “too seriously” and helped her “get her points across.” Ann quipped that she always knew she had “strength in there somewhere” even though she sometimes had to discover this the “hard way.”

During our first interview, Ann was nonchalant as she recalled lodging a complaint to the “Commission” of Civil Rights sometime during the 1960’s because she was turned down for a job based on gender. Ann was twelve years old at the time and

was successful with her complaint. The Civil Rights Commission investigated and eventually founded her claim of prejudice and Ann was offered the job because of this action. Only after I made numerous comments to show that I saw this action as remarkable did Ann acknowledge that this was noteworthy. More significant than acquiring the job, was the idea that Ann sought and received validation for her feeling of injustice. Despite this early success, Ann continued to experience numerous forms of oppression.

This story was the first recalled by Ann, although it was not the first instance of gender oppression that she experienced. Ann was called “tomboy” throughout her childhood because in her words she “knew what [she] liked to do” and “didn’t let it (gendered prescriptions) stop [her]” (lines 842-850). Despite this claim, Ann admitted that she felt shame and often had to choose one gender prescription over another, therefore losing the possibility of multiplicity.

Ann’s nonchalant tone about her gendered oppression gave way during our second interview. Prior to our second meeting, Ann shared with me over the phone that since our first interview, she recalled even earlier experiences where gender was a mark that kept her from being able to do as she wanted. During our interview she expressed pride about her activism in the eighties as well as the seventies. She indicated that her willingness to share personal narratives during this project was a continuation of her quest to be a voice against oppression. She recalled additional stories of oppression, and was quick to note that she had so many experiences of oppression that it was difficult to recall them all.

Additional stories of oppression during the second interview included barriers for gender, race, and class that occurred in religious, academic, and private settings. Ann first added the story of being “hit like a ton of bricks” while helping set up the altar she was told by her favorite nun that she could not become an altar boy because of her gender. Ann smiled slyly as she recalled stories of receiving many smoking fines in Catholic school because she was caught violating the smoking rules set for females. Ann expanded her narrative about oppression to include economic disadvantage as another identity marker.

B. Future at stake

Ann began her narrative about her days in high school on a light note. Ann recalled proudly the smoking fines she accumulated by going against smoking rules set aside for females. Ann explained that girls were not to smoke anywhere on the campus, nor were they to dare smoking off campus while wearing their uniforms. If caught, females were charged a fine of \$15, while males had a designated smoking area, and were fined \$10 if caught outside of this area. Ann’s fines totaled \$95 by the time she was finally able to convince her father that she should attend public school.

During our second and third interviews, Ann included the stories of hardship that characterized her adolescence. Ann did not know what goals she could strive towards for her future, largely because her adolescence was filled with tragedy and loss. Ann’s grades deteriorated when her mother’s alcoholism progressed, and she was even more of a “mess” when her mother died. During the third interview, Ann clarified that she was 14 instead of 16 years old, at the time of her mother’s death. Ann’s grades in school became even less of a priority as she acted out by drinking, smoking, and not attending classes.

Instead of returning to live with her father following the death of her mother, she chose to stay in the area that she was living, and stayed with friends of her sister's.

Ann's difficulties in school continued, until she convinced her father that she should attend public instead of private school. Ann's father agreed to this, because she believed that he did not prioritize her education, let alone a private, Catholic, education that cost money. Attending public school was not an option for Ann unless she was residing with her father, who was now her legal guardian following the death of her mother. Only because she was adamant about not returning to Catholic school, did she agree to relocate to her father's residence. Ann stayed with her father for about a "quarter of the school term" before leaving for basketball camp, and eventually getting emancipated, and returning to live with her sister's friends in the area she lived prior to the death of her mother.

Ann's father was convinced that she should drop out of high school during her final year to attend a secretarial school. Even though she was not sure what she wanted to do, she knew that going to secretarial school and working until she got married was not something that she considered a viable option. Ann was left without a role model for alternatives. Even though Ann had begun to drink heavily herself, she knew that acting like her mother by frequenting bars and eventually getting married, was also not a positive alternative.

Ann did not have a positive role model until she attended public school, where she met a Black female history teacher, who took an interest in her. This woman pulled Ann aside to encourage her to attend her class, even if this meant that she was high or drunk. Ann laughed and said that she was such a "jerk" because she would throw an

empty rum bottle away in front of this woman's classroom when she entered. This same teacher also helped Ann put together all of the paperwork needed for college applications and financial assistance. Ann attributed this teacher's interest and assistance to her decision to enter college, and ultimately change her life.

During the third interview, Ann and I reflected on the difficulties that she faced as a very young girl. I expressed my respect for her struggle, and subsequent ability to maintain her "fighter" spirit. Ann agreed with this appraisal and admitted that she was often surprised at how well she had done given the circumstances. She also commented towards the end of our talk, that I came into her life at a time of transition, when she needed to be reminded of her values and strength. In this way, it seemed that I was able to serve as a voice of validation. Though I was honored to hear this from someone who I looked up to, it also symbolized that support and openness continued to be a rare experience for Ann.

C. The tomboy: rebel with a cause and consequences.

When Ann discussed her experience as a "tomboy," it reminded me of Levi-Strauss's claim that biology defined women by virtue of their roles in society. Ann's prescribed role in society was to participate in tea parties, and in other words, prepare for feminine activities to be performed later in life. Instead, Ann ran around, and acted like a "gypsy" (as she was called). She was perceived negatively because doing as she pleased threatened her willingness to succumb to the role of female or object of exchange (Levi-Strauss, 1969, p. 480). In Ann's case this threat was indeed real, because this experience as a child helped her to learn to overcome criticisms of others instead of giving into social pressure.

This experience of being rebellious was not altogether positive however, because she internalized shame about not belonging to any one group. Her wandering, as she called it, suggested that she had to seek refuge somewhere, and was often left out. Ann was not “someone’s son or a girl” but was a tomboy, which in her words meant that she was someone she was “not supposed to be.” As someone who identified with what was “not to be,” Ann was alone.

During our first meeting, I interpreted Ann’s sarcasm about not being able to wear dresses and play baseball at the same time, as frustration with others that refused to allow her to fit into more than one prescribed category. Ann seemed to be saying that others had difficulty reconciling her desire to wear a dress, with her desire to play sports and engage in activities not typically prescribed for girls. During our second interview, Ann questioned my interpretation about her desire to wear a dress because she said, she was “quite happy” not to wear dresses. Ann agreed with my clarification that the issue was not that she wanted to wear dresses, but that she felt that she should have the option to do both. Ann and I laughed, when she recalled an instance when she did choose a dress, and to her mother’s horror, had not ironed it in preparation for playing “army.”

Ann was also seen as different when she moved to a new neighborhood and she was the “darkest thing they had ever seen.” Race and skin color differentiated Ann from others in her neighborhood, but more significantly, from others in her family. Ann expanded this story during the second interview, to explain why race was such a significant marker for her identity in spite of the fact that she had always identified as Caucasian. Ann’s race was first called into question because her neighbors noticed that

she had darker skin. Even though Ann suffered the label “Puerto Rican Nigger,” race did not become an issue for her until she learned that her father was not her biological father.

Ann was the result of an affair between her mother and a different man than she had identified as her father. The affair between her mother and this man led to the subsequent divorce between Ann’s mother and the man whom she had identified as her father. Later, upon discovering the roots of Ann’s different skin color, and the subsequent divorce, Ann’s sisters resented her.

Ann began to question the racial identity of her biological father and herself, but felt the need to keep quiet about these questions, because she knew that this was a controversial topic. Ann recalled her childhood label of “Puerto Rican Nigger” and quietly wondered if her tormentors had been right. She also wondered if the stigma of being Puerto Rican, which her family viewed as less than, was at the root of the silence about her father’s nationality. She also recalled being uncertain why her mother felt the need to tell neighbors that she and her sisters had the same father. The silence about race plagued Ann with uncertainty, until she finally uncovered the truth about her father’s nationality on her own.

Ann linked the alcoholism and eventual death of her mother to the pressures she faced as a divorced mother of three who worked three jobs to make ends meet. Ann depicted her mother as a tragic heroine, who was at once willing to take risks and encourage her children to do the same, while also depending on alcohol to get her through the difficulties. Despite Ann’s own hardships of growing up with an alcoholic mother and then losing her primary caretaker, she attributed her strong belief in equal rights for oppressed groups to her mother’s encouragement to stand up for herself and

believe in her own abilities. Ann's mother modeled risk taking and freedom to make choices that were not necessarily commonplace or even acceptable to society at large, even though her choices came with a heavy price.

In accordance with Lacan's theory, Ann's identity continuously felt at issue when she was forced to choose between the two intelligible genders, visible racial categories, and accepted sexual orientation identity because others did not validate that she fit into the designated and/or acceptable categories. As a result, Ann was not able to wear a dress and then play baseball with the same ease as someone who was perceived as primarily feminine or masculine. She was not allowed to take her race and appearance for granted because she was judged by color instead of the race with which she identified. Instead, as she alluded to, these choices carried a lot more weight. Ann was perceived as someone who did not assimilate particularly masculine or feminine traits and was therefore designated a "Puerto Rican Nigger" "tomboy." Despite these judgements to the contrary, Ann held on to her identity as a Caucasian female and resisted the prescribed silence.

Ann's hesitance during the first interview was clarified during the second interview. Ann explained that she felt more comfortable talking to me after the first interview, and had decided that these personally tragic narratives were pivotal in her development as a woman in a patriarchal culture and were relevant to this project. Despite her reports of greater comfort with me, she continually expressed concern about adding irrelevant information during the second interview, and even expressed concern that she had been withholding this information from me during our first encounter. I tried to reassure her that her narratives were helpful and provided clarity while also expressing my fear that Ann would feel vulnerable if I included all of the information. Despite my

desire to resist silence and Ann's assertiveness, we continually had to negotiate between silence and resistance during the second meeting. This uncertainty lent support for the idea that patriarchy is a discourse of silence that must be disrupted through disclosure, even if this disclosure carries a weight of discomfort.

Ann validated this insight during the third interview. She went on to say that she rarely conceptualized patriarchy in this way but agreed that she often felt silenced and constricted by the roles prescribed for women and men. She laughed when she said she did "not hate all men," and agreed with me, that we were all silenced by prescriptions that did not allow for openness, and self-expression.

D. Coming Out

In contrast to her experiences of being on the outside while growing up, she felt unity among women who participated at the women's center at her undergraduate institution. Ann also felt empowered by participating in a gender-focused course that showed her there was a history to feminist activism that had successfully worked to create change. Ann connected with the women at the center emotionally and politically. The center nurtured Ann literally and figuratively, with warm soup lunches and being amongst supportive women united in their personal and political cause. During this time, Ann was able to identify her sexual orientation and "come out" without outing herself from the group, at least initially.

Despite the connection she felt she also recognized that the mark of lesbian carried some mark of differentiation even among this "united" group. Ann admitted that she felt most comfortable not being identified as a lesbian feminist because she preferred being a part of the group as a whole. Later in the interview, Ann also admitted that she

was often disappointed by the lack of support provided by the women's movement for the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender political agenda.

During the interview, Ann's terminology of "outing" herself and her reliance on sarcasm suggested that she felt this identification was a risk. Ann indirectly conveyed this by referring to feminists whom she experienced as more split off and less supportive than they had been in the days of the women's center. She also talked about her usual silence about her sexual orientation because past experiences of rejection have led her to expect this. I wanted to show Ann that I did not want to perpetuate this silence and instead encouraged her to share narratives that she related to gender identity, including sexual orientation.

Ann acknowledged that sexual orientation played a "very big role" in her life as a woman. She linked sexual orientation to feeling like an outsider, much like her experiences growing up. She had to put up with people assuming that she was straight, and assumed that they would be uncomfortable if she did reveal the truth. As a lesbian, Ann learned to maintain silence about a private life that she believed no one, including her family, wanted to hear about. As a result, Ann lost the ability to share her life without taking a risk. Ann took this risk during our interview, and as a result resisted the prescribed silence of the patriarchal, heterosexual discourse.

E. Going back in

Following graduation from college and the days at the women's center, Ann faced being on the outside again. Although she attained a bachelors degree in criminal justice with the goal of becoming a police officer, Ann went on to pursue social work. She made based her decision not to pursue police work on the grounds that the field was dominated

by men and she did not feel she was in good enough shape to compete with them physically. Even though this may have been accurate since she joked that she was a smoker, she also attributed this decision to her own unconscious indoctrination of gender and her internalization of the limits that this posed.

During our second interview, Ann added that the final issue that changed her mind from becoming a police officer to pursuing social work was her fear that her sexual identification as a lesbian would be “discovered.” She feared that this would lead to dismissal of her application. As Ann sarcastically quipped, it was between being a lesbian and a cop. I joked that this was a nice choice and we moved on. I believe that our decision to change the topic and move on came from our shared understanding that this issue did not deserve further explanation because the oppression that was a part of this context was apparent and disgraceful.

During her earlier years as a social worker, Ann worked closely with male police officers due to their roles in family services. She endured being left out of discussions because the male police officers did not credit her with the ability to contribute. She talked of mentally preparing herself to withstand the patronizing behavior, and the lack of credibility that she was given, despite the fact that she was the one who held an advanced degree. She knew when to acquiesce and keep her mouth shut in an effort to maintain her job and even learned to take advantage of her oppressed position by getting lunch out of the men who enjoyed taking care of the woman they viewed as a subordinate.

Ann was differentiated by virtue of what she was not allowed to take part in because she was a woman. This experience supports Lacan’s (1949/1996) formulation that male subjectivity is founded upon the negation of women’s subjectivity (Butler,

1990, p.43-47). The police officers gained status and power when Ann was kept out of discussions and effectively silenced. Ann admitted that some things have changed since her early days in the field of social work, although she reported that men are still promoted to administrative positions more often than women.

F. Rights denied

Ann also talked about the consequences of not being granted the right to marry and receive social security benefits. Because they are unable to marry, Ann is unable to be sustained by her partner's health care benefits and would not receive social security benefits from her partner upon death, unlike heterosexually married couples. Ann tried to make light of her anger and difficulties by telling her self-proclaimed joke that she and her gay male friends talk of marrying each other so that all of their collective money does not go back to the government when they die. I heartily agreed that Ann's scheme was a good idea and we both laughed and went on to condemn the government's demand for heterosexual marriage. What we did not talk about was the sadness and loss caused by this, and the subsequent distance that stood between she and her partner who could not live in the same state because neither could afford to lose their jobs.

Instead of expecting support, a theme emerged where Ann was "the one" who was left out. She was the girl who was not hired because of her gender, the tomboy who did not fit into groups as easily as other children. Instead, Ann is the female, the lesbian, the social worker, who did things that others could not and will not do, like empathize with marginalized groups. She had to "prepare herself mentally" to put up with the straight men who disregarded her expertise. When she did speak of supportive relationships she used words like "attached [her]self" (line 981), and "latched on to" (line 985) which

suggested that she felt uncertainty about the reciprocity of even these relationships.

Experiences of oppression have left Ann marked as different and unheard and she is not alone in this oppressive position.

The function of limit setting, or in Lacan's terms the "paternal function," was taken up by others around Ann who contradicted her mother's message that she could "do anything" (Fink, 1997, p.110). The others in Ann's life continuously imposed limits on her abilities. Ann was denied jobs because of gender, denied voice by men in her field, and even denied friendship when she did not participate in activities deemed appropriate for females.

In addition to providing evidence for Lacan's theory of the paternal function, Ann's story also shows that limits related to gender designation are detrimental and unnecessary. Ann experienced gender prescriptions as thwarting but was willing to make choices that went against traditional values and still achieve sanity. Ann internalized her own set of limits that enabled her to live a productive and meaningful life, even though she faced unnecessary consequences such as living in another state from her partner and feeling the need to silence herself even though she has a lot to offer.

G. Stories of melancholia

Ann's stories of gendered identity were marked by loss from childhood through to adulthood. Throughout our dialogue, Ann and I referenced loss and sacrifice when we spoke about gender identity, race, and sexual orientation. Ann and I agreed that "society as a whole" kept "splitting and splitting, and splitting" (line 1147). We spoke of lost opportunities for women and girls, loss of validation for Ann's choices to pursue

activities of her own accord, loss of friends and family ties, and loss of intimacy among women and men.

Though Butler (1997) made no empirical claims, I would like to pose my dialogue with Ann as evidence for gender identification through generalized melancholia. Ann also validated Butler's theory and stopped reading to say that she found this theory interesting and true to her experience. Butler proposed that our strong emotional links to gender within a heterosexualized dichotomy stemmed from our difficulties letting others go and our inability to mourn the loss of connection to homosexual attachments. In other words, Butler proposed that the current heterosexual culture demanded that we dismiss any homosexual attachments without providing the ability to mourn this loss. As a result, we experience melancholia or grief that has no representation and is given no validation as emptiness.

We become used to the limits, and feel unable to conceptualize our gender identity in any way aside from the need to hold onto our prescribed mark as a mark of identity. In other words, facing the loss of our particular gender becomes a loss of who, we think, we are. When our mother or our father (whichever may be the case) are denied to us because of disapproval and denial of homosexual attachment, we incorporate this other psychologically into a part of ourselves and go on as if nothing has been lost.

When we experience homosexual desire, however, what was once a feeling of emptiness becomes, in Butler's (1997) words "panic" (p. 135-136). The panic that one is losing our gendered identity emerges because threats to heterosexuality, threatens gender itself (p. 135-6). Ann validated the panic described by Butler, and added her own story of being afraid that she would talk in her sleep and reveal to the horror of her straight

roommate that she was lesbian. Homosexual identification is no less founded upon standards of intimate attachment because this choice remains dependent upon differentiation between two genders. What is different is the shame that is attached to the loved one and the lack of validation the person receives by the majority of Western society. The lack of validation and stigma that Ann has been subjected to because of her identification with lesbianism was referenced throughout Ann's narrative.

Ann's mark of gender, though stigmatizing and oppressive, did provide an identity and a connection to others similarly marked. Her identification allowed her to seek out a partner with whom she connects, provided a basis from which to participate in a gender based movement, and according to Ann, provides some protection from the military draft at least in this country. Ann was not sure that this was necessarily positive, but did say that she had never been anything else and therefore did not necessarily view her mark as a woman as negative.

We acknowledged that thinking about gender in new ways could help in reconfiguring the oppressive dynamics that currently plague our culture, but neither of us talked of ways to let gender go, nor did we voice a readiness to do this. I interpreted this absence to also fit with Butler's theory of gender as melancholia. We are so tied to gender as our identity, that even when it necessitates further loss of possibility, we are unwilling to give it up. Our fear of loss is greater than our fear of further oppression.

III. Collective Activism: disrupting silence

A. Connecting others

In spite of all of the denial that Ann experienced, she became a caretaker, an advocate, and a role model for those whom she believed faced similar experiences of

oppression. Ann took care of her sister when she faced cancer, even though this same sister often dismissed her lifestyle. Ann took care to participate in this project because she empathized with researchers' dependence on willing participants. Ann advocated for herself and other women by participating in feminist and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered political events. By becoming a coach, she also served as a role model for her young nieces and other young women who participated in traditionally male dominated sports.

Ann asserted herself as a feminist with a strong stance in opposition to the majority of women whom she believes offer excuses to distance themselves from this label. She talked about the lack of support for feminism and the negative connotations that this term evoked for many: baby killers, job stealers, and lesbians. Ann initiated discussion about the excuses that people offered when they were willing to identify as feminist and how this served to distance them from feminism in the end because it played into the idea that feminism is a dirty word. Ann also believed that men differentiated themselves from gender issues and feminism because they did not take the issues seriously.

Ann distanced herself from alignment with the women's movement when she spoke of the lack of efforts it has made to push for "gay issues." She referred to herself as outside and apart from the agenda of getting "adequate childcare," even though she also pointed to this as an issue of importance. As the outsider again, Ann may have felt the need to differentiate herself from a movement that has let her down.

Ann's characterization of herself as an "old historian" was the exact phrase she used to describe herself during both interviews, and this title seemed to fit with her role

as the teacher who preserved women's voices. As an "old historian" Ann's voice kept women's narratives alive, even after they passed. Ann was a very adept historian during this project and provided me with connections to women's history that were unknown to me. By preserving this information and weaving it into our narrative, I hope to take my part in this quest to preserve women's history and pass on this information for Ann.

B. Oppressive roots

When speaking about the roots of gender difference, Ann and I diverged during the first interview. Ann talked of men and women being fundamentally different in some way but was ambivalent about where these differences came from. She initially attributed the differences to some kind of biological basis. Ann could not come up with biological or physical bases for the difference between genders during the first interview, but did list differences in strength and testosterone during the second interview.

Ann's ambivalence about gender was derived from her experiences of women being more supportive than men, and feeling more comfortable going to women for support. She acknowledged that this difference could come from being raised in an environment where women were taught to be more supportive. She also noted that men and women's inability to recognize the strengths of the other gender prevented equality from developing, and added that gender markings for children were more negative than for adults because the boys were so much less restricted than the girls.

During the second interview, Ann questioned my view of these differences and asked that I explain my ambivalence about posing differences in a fundamental way. I discussed feminist post-structural theories of difference and explained that conceptualizing our current gender system as a system that oppresses rather than a system

that emerges in response to some predetermined givens, provides room to question the oppression. Ann agreed with this idea and acknowledged that she often “fell back” on this assumption. She also talked about the ways that the biological assumption of difference covered over the issues that women faced and was often used to justify the oppression.

My intention was to encourage Ann to reflect on her fundamental difference theory, with the hope that she would recognize that these differences did not need to be fundamental. I also wanted to highlight Ann’s willingness to choose identities for herself, particularly those that were different from those prescribed for a woman. Ann’s narrative provides support for feminist post-structural theories because it illustrates possibilities for change, while also highlighting the damage that ensues if we do not lift the oppressive doctrine of difference.

C. Blaming our selves

During the first interview I assumed that Ann internalized the shame as a consequence of being a part of heterosexualized/patriarchal discourse. I originally misinterpreted Ann’s sarcasm about accepting the lack of support for LGBT issues and women’s issues on the part of men to be a sign of this shame. During the second interview, however, Ann clarified that her sarcasm was a way for her to voice her anger towards those who dismissed gender issues.

By assuming that Ann accepted the discourse of patriarchy I was assuming a hierarchical relationship with Ann. In effect I mistook her sarcasm as a sign that she was not as aware of the damaging effects that she had suffered. In essence I silenced the ambiguity of her statements and replaced the multiplicity with a singular answer.

Even though it was important for Ann and I to clarify and reflect on our own inability to escape the patriarchal discourse it also seems important to catch sight of our continuously critical self-reflections. Instead of focusing on mechanisms of oppression, like the government, or even language, Ann and I spent more time criticizing ourselves and worrying about the unfolding of our narrative and the relevance it would hold. Our difficulties escaping a self-blaming narrative fit with Irigaray's (1985) theory that women mimic a language and cultural narrative that we have not produced.

Ann repeatedly expressed concern about providing repetitive and irrelevant information during both interviews. Despite my attempts to discourage this doubt, Ann continued to express uncertainty before sharing her thoughts. It was similarly difficult for me to feel confident about my disclosures during the interviews and analysis. I was afraid of becoming too directive, while also being afraid that a lack of disclosure would promote hierarchical relationships between the participants and myself in our research roles.

I chose to be more disclosive about my feminist post-structural views during my second interview with Ann because I felt it was more important to enact a pedagogical stance that could actually provide validation and support in place of inaction. Instead of promoting biological difference theories by remaining silent and documenting participants' views I felt it would be more important to provide participants with insights that they might find helpful, and in effect disrupt the silence of patriarchal agendas.

IV. Apathy at the root of being stuck

Ann talked a lot about the increasing splits and labels among people who have been marginalized and spoke about the collective loss of hope and unity. In contrast to

this, she referenced times in the seventies that she felt united with others in political activities. She voiced hopelessness about women and men recognizing that “there are different roles or different strengths for both sexes” (lines 331-332). She also attributed the lack of identification with feminism to its association with issues of abortion, lesbianism, and men’s job loss. She referenced the paucity of women in positions of authority, and agreed that the general energy around these issues seemed down. Ann expressed anger and hopelessness about things changing in gay rights and referenced her family’s don’t ask don’t tell policy to the rest of society’s refusal to listen. She went on to talk about the actions she took in the past and acknowledged that she has been less active marching in gay pride parades and group meetings since the 1970’s.

Ann carefully mapped changes in athletic activities to serve as signposts of change and lack of change throughout her life. Ann’s pursuit of women’s basketball in high school was markedly different from being labeled a tomboy who lost friends in early childhood. Despite this, she acknowledged that women’s sports forums remained separate, and that girls continued to need role models and people “putting themselves out there” because women remain in the minority in sports.

V. Disruption of apathy through dialogue: feeling connected and re-aligned with feminism

A. Empowered participant

Ann felt free to talk about topics that she felt more strongly about and often initiated a change if she had something to add to the dialogue. She spoke of loss of physical and emotional intimacy among women and connected this to stigma attached to those who were able to rekindle this supportive atmosphere. Ann’s willingness to speak

about this loss and call attention to the means that covered over the possibility of intimacy showed, however, that this intimacy can be voiced. Ann broke the silence by sharing her desire for physical and emotional support from women that need not carry sexual connotation. As such, this was an act of resistance, even if it was unconscious. Ann was empowered because she chose to resist convention and instead of deferring to my agenda as the researcher, she gave voice to one of the many experiences that would have been lost otherwise.

B. Validation provides room for feelings and self- reflection in research

As I became more direct about validating Ann's experiences of oppression, she became less dismissive of her feelings about being labeled "different," as "tomboy," as child of divorce, as "the darkest thing they had ever seen." Ann termed her childhood as something that she and her sisters "survived." I also became more willing to reflect on and comment on my inability to move outside of the oppressive dynamics as my difficulties finding terms for marginalized people suggested.

Ann and I both became increasingly sarcastic, which also seemed to help Ann talk more openly about more vulnerable feelings of being stigmatized. As someone who is also sarcastic, I felt more able to dialogue with Ann in this way because she accepted this style as her way of getting her points across. I also interpreted our sarcasm as a sign of the ease that we felt as we shared ourselves in the interview. Ann even joked that it felt a little "creepy" reading about herself, because it showed that I saw things about her that she had not considered, or did not intend.

Ann referenced comments made throughout the interview to point towards self-reflection and change. She referenced me indirectly when she sarcastically commented

that she was “again taking a supportive role” when she spoke of supporting her sister’s battle with cancer. Even though Ann initially claimed that she “forgot all about” her activism at the age of twelve, she referenced this example in a later part of the interview to signify her early development of feminist ideology. Ann also thought about her joke that she could “get lunch out of” the male police officers, and indirectly pointed out that the small benefits of current gender identity covered over the damage they caused.

As a researcher that was part of the dialogue, I felt empowered to become an active participant and offer validation to a woman who experienced a lot of oppression and dismissal of her views. I also hoped that my respect for Ann’s hard work was clear to her and helped her to see herself as a champion for marginalized groups, as I did.

C. Parallel process: feeling connected to each other and the issues discussed.

Both Ann and I shared that it felt good to talk during the interview, and reported that we thought about the discussion after the first interview ended. As I drove home I reflected on the similarities and differences in my experiences and wondered how I would have responded to a similar interview. I felt re-connected to my passion for the project and my desire to promote my feminist alignment and enact change. Ann also mentioned that following the initial interview she thought of even more examples of the kinds of things we talked about and we both expressed feeling excited about meeting again.

This feeling of connection increased during the second interview as Ann and I disclosed more of our views of gender, oppression, and personal experiences. Ann called attention to her sarcasm and countered this by saying seriously that in her way she felt she was doing something by participating in this project. She affirmed my goals and said

that she thought the project was important. I shared that I also felt more connected to feminism and activism by focusing on these issues in this project. Ann and I hugged, and expressed hope for each other's futures as we separated. Even though we had one final phone meeting remaining, the physical closeness and intimacy would not be the same and it seemed right that we would end this phase of our work together in this way.

During the third interview, Ann and I continued to share our sense of re-connection to feminist agendas and passions for activism. Ann joked that her "old age" helped to provide a depth to our discussions. Ann was very validating to me as a researcher, writer, and woman. She called the account "impressive" and said that she was glad that I was doing this important work because it renewed her hope that people were still interested in gender and other connecting identifiers that are currently marginalized. We thanked each other at the end of this interview, and exchanged recommendations for various feminist authors' works. I only hope that I have been able to capture at least some of the "fighter" that I had the privilege to meet.

‘Samantha’s’ Individualized Account

I. Setting the stage: glimpses of context

A. Samantha and I

Samantha and I are both in the mental health field and shared the common goal of preferring clinical work to other options. We shared the context of graduate school with Samantha attaining her Master’s in social work and me working on the completion of my Ph.D. in psychology. We were also similar in terms of age, Samantha was 27 years old and I was 29 at the time of the interview. Differences existed in terms of racial identification as Samantha identified as African American and I identified as a Caucasian American, and religious affiliation as I identified as Jewish and she identified as Roman Catholic. The similarities helped to ease the dialogue between us and Samantha took an active role in the research soon after I introduced the topic and explained my feminist stance and agenda for the project. The differences provided richness in terms of the issues that were brought out as a result of the differences in perspectives.

Samantha was the second participant that I interviewed, with the first interview occurring only days before. I was less anxious about our first interview since the interview with the other participant went well. This comfort was reflected in the less structured dialogue, with Samantha taking the lead initiating topics.

Samantha participated in her gender- focused course in the “Spring of ‘98” in the psychology department of her undergraduate institution. Samantha identified with racial, religious, and, professional markers. Samantha was detail oriented and careful to provide as much specific information as possible throughout all three interviews. During the first interview, she even commented that she had considered reviewing course information

prior to our meeting so she would be prepared. Samantha reported that the course “really did” change her because it “made” her aware of the issues that women faced because of gender.

B. Power dynamics that emerged in the project

My clarification of my agenda during the three interviews was important because of my goal to disrupt the notion of researchers as objective, and to disrupt hierarchical notions that the participant should disclose while not being clear as to how their disclosures will be interpreted. I was more disclosive about my agenda during our second meeting because I felt a need to be more active in my encouragement of Samantha’s voice. I responded to questions that Samantha posed about the feminist post-structural theories and went on to disclose my preference for the theories because I wanted her to be clear where I stood. Samantha agreed that the theories “sounded good” to her but questioned their applicability, because she did not think that others would be willing to think “outside of the box.” During the third interview, Samantha even commented that the theories “validated” thoughts that she had prior to participation.

Clarifying my agenda and my theoretical leanings led Samantha to share views about gender that were less constricted, and even radical. I believe that my willingness to be direct with Samantha helped her to feel more comfortable being direct with me, although Samantha’s agreement with my stance may suggest otherwise. Samantha dismissed feeling pressure when asked about this directly. We were better able to talk about the differences that existed between us, and the subsequent additional markers of oppression that she carried as an African American woman. We were also able to help each other understand perspectives that were new to each of us.

Despite the collegial atmosphere, and Samantha's dismissal of my concern that I was not open enough, she continuously needed to be encouraged to speak and give her opinion. Although Samantha took the lead during the first interview, I still needed to encourage her to elaborate on her thoughts. Samantha seemed to need even more encouragement during the second interview, because I was the one to request that she tell me the reason for her smiles, or laughs as she read the narrative. We talked about this need for encouragement, and Samantha admitted that her hesitance came from her concern that her comments would be irrelevant. We related her hesitance to the idea that women are often taught to be quiet. Samantha said that she often wished she was more assertive, but also had fears that she would become too dominating.

During the third and final contact, Samantha seemed more assertive, as she led our conversation away from small talk to the task of offering feedback about her individualized narrative. She had places marked, and was willing to question my quotation of her words that African Americans seemed to be adopting a sexualized, demeaned role without pressure from white people. I clarified that she said this, and pointed out that her awareness of racial discrimination suggested otherwise. She agreed with this and commented that she remembered saying something to this effect, adding that it was not entirely accurate. Samantha's willingness to point out that she was not clear and wanted to know what I was saying about her words suggested that she felt more comfortable asserting her feedback and believing that this feedback was important. It is also important to note, however, that this final contact occurred over the phone, which is likely to have eased some of the tensions of power differences.

C. Getting together

Samantha and I met after one cancellation and about three phone contacts.

Samantha cancelled our first meeting because, she was attacked by a patient, two hours before our scheduled meeting time. We preliminarily set another appointment for the week she returned from the vacation that had also been planned prior to the meeting and the attack. She expressed concern about putting me behind schedule. Even though I was disappointed about not meeting with Samantha, I was happy to hear that she was ok and encouraged that she was still interested and had even anticipated setting another meeting. Samantha and I talked once after she returned from vacation and we set the initial meeting for the following day. The second meeting was set in a similarly quick way, with Samantha agreeing to meet in the same way and day of the week that we had during the first meeting. Needless to say Samantha's reliability and dependability shone through, especially during the third interview, when she called to discuss her feedback instead of waiting for my call as was originally planned.

Samantha was drawn to the poster about gender issues and initiated contact to begin the interview process. She told me over the phone that she participated in research during her years in graduate school and liked to help those who did research. She also mentioned that she was interested in gender issues and was drawn to projects that focused on them since she took a gender-focused course. Even before meeting, it was clear that Samantha was someone who liked to care for others. It was also clear that participation in a gender-focused course provoked thought about her identification as female, and lent support to my decision to work with women who participated in a gender focused course for this reason.

We met at the end of Samantha's day of clinical work, at her job site for both face to face interviews. Both face to face meetings lasted approximately an hour and a half, with the third phone contact lasting about half an hour. Samantha took initiative during the first interview after the initial questions about identifying information, information about her gender focused course, and experiences with gender issues. She addressed issues of gender, race, religion, and her ideology about marginalization. Samantha's pace throughout the first interview was quick and she rarely paused or needed much by way of direction or prompting. During the second interview, Samantha apologized when she read the previous sentence about her pace being quick, and said that she had not meant to do this.

At the end of each of the three interviews Samantha reported that she enjoyed being able to express her views in an open forum. At the end of the second interview, Samantha reported that she discussed gender issues and expectations with her boyfriend after the first interview and felt that this led to positive changes in their relationship. Samantha thanked me at the end of the third interview, because she felt that her participation in the project helped her to come to some important insights about herself and her relationships.

Samantha's process throughout the interviews moved from personal to cultural perspectives and back again. I viewed Samantha as someone who strives to change her behavior in accordance with her ideology as it develops. I also interpreted Samantha's shifts from personal to ideological issues as support for studying gender as a narrative that has personal and political connections and implications.

II. Gender covered over

A. Gender as secondary

Even though Samantha was concerned about race and religion and had pursued courses in each, she did not explore or think about gender being a mark of oppression until she went to college. She took a gender-focused course because she had not taken any previous gender courses and because she liked the idea that it was small in terms of class size. Samantha emphasized her enjoyment of the course and differentiated it from other courses by the enthusiasm of the instructor and the open forum for discussion that existed. Samantha also seemed to get a lot out of the course because she became aware of gender as an issue of oppression for the first time, and attributed her awareness of gender issues to this course.

The idea that Samantha pursued a gender focused course largely because she had not taken one before and had not identified gender as an issue, showcased the apathy that surrounds gender and the covering over of gender as a mark of oppression. This was evident in the case of Samantha because she was someone who was interested in issues of oppression and still was not aware that gender could be identified as an issue of oppression. She explained several times that she was not “socialized that way” and assumed that all women were able to make choices like her mother.

The idea that gender was not an obvious mark of oppression was illustrated by Samantha’s lack of identification of it as such. When gender is conceptualized as a biological marker, issues of difference are seen as natural and unchangeable, and the oppression of gendered markings loses visibility. Gender gained visibility for Samantha

when she spoke of women being equated with child-care and were assumed to be less able than men. She was then willing to conceptualize gender as a mark of oppression.

During the second interview, Samantha affirmed this interpretation about gender and her own apathy about identifying gender as a mark of oppression. She attributed her apathy to the idea that she felt more hindered by racial prejudice and noted that people saw her first as African American and second as a woman. She commented that these two marks of oppression put her at the “bottom of the barrel.”

Differences in privilege between gendered identities seem less visible because they are rarely posed as something that signifies value. Levi-Strauss (1969) asserted that gender differences were necessary and fundamental to the survival of human society. As such, the issue of gender oppression is covered over because the mark of gender is seen as something that emanates from a fundamental characteristic. The oppression of women becomes necessary for society to function. Women as caretakers, the gender that bears children and gains status through roles of wife and mother serves a necessary purpose. What is not immediately obvious in this conceptualization is the fact that women are denied power in forums based on this difference. Women are seen as less than and this view is justified by their lack of biologically male parts.

Samantha took issue with Levi-Strauss’s comment that gender differences were necessary. She drew from her own experience and pointed out that men were not always the “breadwinners” and vice versa. She acknowledged that “of course” men and women needed to ensure the “survival of the human society” but that this did not mean that differences between men and women were necessary. I reminded Samantha that during the first meeting she had even brought up ways that babies could be created or mothered

aside from women bearing children. She agreed and I went on to link this idea of freeing women from the fundamental role of mother to feminist post-structural theories that posed this as a constricting factor in our current gender conceptualization.

In this society we can not imagine being distanced from gender differentiation, though some of us are able to conceptualize the dangers inherent to racial prejudice. In accordance with Rubin's (1997) critique, to not identify gender as a mark of oppression and instead to assume that it is natural and necessary, promotes apathy about gender issues and covers over the importance of resisting the limits placed upon this along with other oppressive identifications. This is dangerous because we internalize limits placed upon our gendered identification and in the case of women accept oppression.

B. Women unhindered

Samantha attributed her lack of sensitivity towards women's issues to growing up with her mother whom she viewed as strong and unhindered by her gender. While in college, Samantha was surprised to discover that all women were not the "head of the household" like her mother, and instead sometimes yielded to the man of the household. This surprised Samantha because she had grown up assuming that she would work and maintain independence, and not acquiesce to anyone. She was even more surprised to learn that even some of her peers in school intended to stay at home and raise children, because she had never considered this as an option. Even though Samantha commented that she "could not make sense of this view," she was very careful not to say that she did not want to judge these other women as "weak" or "subservient."

By watching her mother take initiative and return to college to get a better job following the death of her husband, Samantha internalized the importance of taking

initiative and being able to support herself and her family. Samantha was reflective of the fact that she took education and occupational skills for granted and assumed that everyone sought these opportunities to ensure security for themselves and their families. She did not see gender as a mitigating factor for any of her goals, but did allude to the idea that everyone may not have that experience. During the second interview, Samantha added that even though she did not attribute her career choice to gender, she “admitted” that “even she” could see that women tended to work in helping professions, while men tended towards business, and generally more profitable endeavors.

When asked if there were positive effects of being female, Samantha was particularly vocal about the emotional connections and values that most women shared in care-taking roles. Both of us shared a desire to help others, as evidenced by our professions. Samantha’s care-taking position throughout our work together provided clarity to the phenomenon that I aimed to study by virtue of her participation, and led to a personal connection that allowed each of us to confront our differences while maintaining connection. She added that bearing children was a benefit to being a woman, along with the “attractiveness of our organs” as opposed to men.

C. Patriarchal deflection covers over oppression

Samantha acknowledged during the first two interviews that she had a tendency to silence herself when she thought about issues of oppression because she assumed that her ideas were irrelevant or obvious. Samantha’s lack of confidence seemed to be a symptom of the oppression of African American female voice, while also stemming from the difficulty locating oppressive dynamics that emanate from the larger cultural context that

keeps them hidden. According to Irigaray (1985), the discourse of patriarchy is “always a project of diversion, deflection, and reduction of the other into the Same” (p. 74).

Samantha’s ambivalence about seeing herself and other marginalized groups as oppressed was clear during the first interview. During the first interview, Samantha attributed gender and racial issues to historical premises, but tended to back away from insights that pointed to currently oppressive conditions. Even though she talked about feeling “sensitive” about racial prejudice, she attributed existing issues to those who were oppressed and did not talk about larger cultural mechanisms of oppression. She expressed surprise that “even like media-wise it seems like they try to/..../say like (illegitimate children) it’s ok” (lines 622-624,& 634-635). When talking about perceptions about men she said “you kinda look at the men as the ones who can do things a little bit better “ and she admitted that she “didn’t know why that [was]” (lines 864-873).

During the second interview, however, Samantha was clear that she faced more oppression, than I, as a white woman. She referenced the idea that she had two marks of oppression and was at the “bottom of the barrel.” Samantha reported that more than half of African American households were headed by single parents. She also commented that men in marginalized groups had a more difficult time fulfilling their role because they had higher expectations placed on them because they were male and were expected to be more successful than their female counterparts. She also added that all of the gender roles in African American culture were “muddy at this point” because so few African American men were around, at least in Samantha’s experience. Samantha attributed this

to our Western patriarchal culture, and added that gender roles were probably different elsewhere.

D. Hindered women: gender roles of security

Only after Samantha fleshed out her exasperation about women being expected to provide care for children without help from their male partners, did she begin to highlight the lack of choices available to women. I supported Samantha's reflection and enacted a feminist stance by encouraging her to speak her mind. My encouragement to give voice to power dynamic as they related to gender might have been more necessary at these times because she was more used to thinking about power dynamics as they pertained to race.

Samantha focused on the idea that women have assumed the role of caretaker because they have no other options available since males are not expected to reciprocate care. Samantha distanced herself from those who considered childbearing a prerequisite for qualifying as a woman. Samantha posed the role of mother as a choice that was often assumed to be the destiny of women. Samantha also talked of her concern for her mother and other women in similar situations who had to do everything and then did not even know if they were "doing it right." In this way, Samantha contested biological links that equated women with child bearing and also contested the assumption that women have some sort of innate ability to care for children that men do not possess. Just as Samantha pointed out, there are many ways to care for children and adopt the role of "mother" that exist outside of pregnancy.

As the biological bearers of children, we are left with few options and are stigmatized if we do not comply with this expectation. This reminded me of Irigaray's

(1985) claim that women are mimicking a “language we have not produced” (p. 189). In other words, our identity as women has been figured out for us, leaving little room to question what we want to be. Women’s identity is assumed to be predetermined even though the role of women has changed. Despite some changes, we have not been granted the right to speak about, or conceptualize our roles apart from the patriarchal cultural milieu. As Irigaray described (1985), women’s desire is inarticulable when we are forced into an identity that is based on our own oppression. Women’s desire, therefore remains unconscious even to women themselves.

Samantha’s fear of women being unable to care for themselves was clear when she repeated in several scenarios that women needed to prepare themselves with education and jobs because of the imminent danger of losing their husbands for one reason or another. She did not, however, call attention to men’s need to do the same in the case of losing their female partners. This suggested that women’s vulnerability stood out to Samantha implicitly, even though this was not thematized. Samantha added during the second interview that she had not even considered men losing security when they lost their female partners because this was not part of her expectation for men and their “masculine” role.

Samantha said that it was a “new experience” for her to hear male colleagues talk about staying at home with their children because their wives were the “breadwinners.” She attributed her surprise to the differences in her “environment, culture and class structure” where she grew up. I asked her to say more about this, and told her that I was surprised that she seemed to be saying that this was a new experience for her and not others in our Western patriarchal culture. She explained that she rarely heard stories of

men leaving their jobs due to their wives' income outside of her current work context, and assumed that it may be a difference that she experienced as new where others would not. It may be important to note that the men talking about leaving their jobs to care for their children were white. Samantha differentiated white culture from black culture throughout the interview, and as such, she may have been hesitant to generalize the experiences of these white men and her own expectations. I affirmed that this was a new experience for me as well.

I have argued that gender oppression is rarely thematized as it currently exists because those of us who have grown up in the twentieth century in Western culture have been appropriated by a system that prescribes a dismissive stance towards women's stories and feminist agendas. Although it is common knowledge that women used to stay home and were often stigmatized if they chose otherwise, we all tend to dismiss the impediments that currently face women because we are part of a dialogue that says that things have changed. Samantha and I have grown up with the expectation to work outside of the home. What remains unchanged, however, is the power differentials and differences in pay scale that continue to plague women and the fields typically chosen by women. Samantha was surprised to notice how few men were in social work and was more taken back by the fact that she saw men move up the ranks and viewed as superior to the majority of social workers who were women.

E. Gender identity by choice

As someone who did not conceptualize herself as oppressed by gender, Samantha conceptualized her role as a woman to be dictated by choices that she made. As such, Samantha took responsibility for her life and saw options as the means to her own

security. She chose to return to work even though she was physically attacked because she valued her financial and occupational goals. She did not let this incident pass without thought about her own preferences and expectations about job treatment, instead, she adopted an active stance to seek new opportunities.

Gender role expectations only became thematic between Samantha and her boyfriend when she was attacked physically at work. Prior to this, gender role expectations were unspoken and assumed to be similar between she and her partner. Samantha's expectation of gender role agreement between she and her boyfriend highlighted the assumption of a shared context. Only by calling this shared context into question did Samantha begin to question the effects that these prescriptions had on her relationship with others, particularly her romantic relationship.

This example points to the idea that gendered expectations are not the same for all of us. Instead we live out narratives as prescribed by culture only in so far as these are supported and prescribed by those around us, and in so far as we each take them up. This is in keeping with Lacan's (1949/1996) formulation of identity. Lacan (1949/1996) conceptualized the child's realization of his or her identity as a mediation by others and the child's internalization of this mediation. In other words, the child's identity is shaped by the ways that others treat her/him, and ultimately this influences the child's sense of him/her self.

Samantha's expectations of her future as an African American woman were shaped by her role models. For example, she grew up with a mother who modeled responsibility and choice. Her mother did not let the death of her husband or the marks of being an African American woman stop her from realizing her goals and making

choices of her own accord. Samantha's mother modeled and reinforced the importance of standing on your own two feet and not letting hardship, including prejudice, keep her down.

The expectations of Samantha's boyfriend for gender roles were also modeled and molded by his experiences growing up. He saw his mother as the caretaker of the children and this was attributed to the fact that she was marked by gender. His father's role was determined by a different mark that prescribed working outside of the home and providing financial resources. As a child who was important and cared for, Samantha's boyfriend internalized the gendered marker that meant that he would someday be the one to leave the house to work, while expecting that his female partner would not.

Integrating choice into the conceptualization of gender roles provided Samantha with a different conceptualization of herself in the role of woman than the expectations held by her boyfriend. Samantha was not opposed to staying home and taking care of her children or leaving her current job, but was opposed to being expected to adopt this role without options or consideration of her goals. Instead, Samantha viewed each option as a choice that needed to be discussed and considered in light of individual preferences between she and her boyfriend. Upon reading this during the second interview, Samantha proclaimed that this was "right!"

To go further with this conceptualization of modeling and taking up gender identification as a series of choices, Butler (1997) conceptualized gender as a series of incorporations of significant others into our ego. She focused on our need to separate ourselves from these others because of demands made by our shared Western cultural context. Because this cultural context currently demands renunciation of homosexual

attachments, we are forced to separate ourselves from same-gendered others. In order to avoid this loss, we internalize aspects of this other that support our ego and grant us gendered identity. As such, we adopt values prescribed for our gender by internalizing the values of the same-gendered other in an effort to avoid the complete loss of the attachment that we have for this other. This identification with gendered identity is currently experienced as a necessity because it gives us a place from which to become a part of a culture that differentiates along male and female gendered lines. This identification is taken up, even though it also necessitates loss and constricts possibilities for different identities.

Connecting this theory to Samantha's narratives helped me to clarify the link between traditional gender role expectations and new conceptualizations of gender as performative. In the case of Samantha, the gender role ideology that she subscribed to was not immediately linked to biology, or any other static concept. It was however, linked to security and a desire to have choices and work towards occupational and personal goals, such as her relationship with her boyfriend. In an effort to preserve security, and not subscribe completely to gender as arbitrary, Samantha backed off from this stance and endorsed a gendered stance that allowed her to keep her identity as a woman, while still being free to make choices even those pertaining to childcare.

As Butler (1997) warned, freedom is experienced as a threat because it threatens us with the loss of an identity that currently defines us in the world (pp. 135-137). In order to avoid this loss, Samantha still held onto her identification as a woman, but did so in a way that was less constricted than traditional prescriptions for women. After reading this theory, Samantha acknowledged that she could "see this."

Butler (1997) also talked about the threats to gender that are inherent within threats to heterosexuality (pp. 135-136). As previously discussed, gender can be conceptualized as a series of incorporations and identifications of gendered prescriptions and how we take these up. If we think about gender roles that we have grown up with, however, a very clear differentiation between women's roles and men's roles in heterosexual relationships has been modeled and portrayed in endless incantations. As such, it is much more difficult to negotiate different ways to juggle new kinds of roles and expectations if we do not simply reiterate the roles that have been represented.

Just as Samantha pointed out, discussion is necessary if we are to work through issues and negotiate our goals and identifications with another person. Instead of taking this for granted, as Samantha and her boyfriend did initially, we must work to redefine relationships and expectations. This does pose a threat to heterosexuality as gender becomes less fixed and is no longer identified by virtue of any one marker. However, this negotiation also opens up new possibilities for connection that are less constricting.

For example, Samantha recognized during the second interview that the "feeling like a lady" experience was related to expectations of gendered prescriptions. During the first interview Samantha talked of feeling special and like a "lady" when her boyfriend did things like pull out her chair or open up a door. She explained that her boyfriend did not always do these things, and did not feel that he had to do these things, but only made these gestures during special occasions.

She did not conceptualize these acts as a sign that she required special help to maneuver physically in the world until she read this account during the second interview. She acknowledged that because these acts were specifically related to roles adopted by

men and women they reflected the expectations for gender strengths and weaknesses. For example, lack of strength and initiative characterize someone who can not do for herself. Samantha furthered this idea, by talking about her boyfriend's reaction if these roles and acts were reversed. She anticipated that he may initially enjoy the attention, because he often teased that she did not do this for him. She also added that eventually he would probably start to feel incompetent, and this would threaten his "machismo." Samantha laughed and said he would be like "what, I can't open a door?" If we shake the expectations up, I believe it would be possible for Samantha to do different things to show her boyfriend that he was also special without necessarily equating this special feeling with a mark of gender.

F. Internalized gender oppression

Despite her opposition to traditional gender role prescriptions, Samantha internalized the gendered prescription for women as evidenced by her tendency to minimize her accomplishments and silence her voice. While she talked about the fact that she had a master's degree and did not intend to "sit on her butt," she minimized her achievement as a "masters in small wages" and characterized her impact in this role as "very small." During the second interview Samantha laughed when she discovered that I had included her master's in small wages comment. Kidding aside, Samantha waited for encouragement from me throughout the first two interviews to voice her views because she assumed that her voice would be irrelevant. Samantha also likened the difference in job considerations between she and her boyfriend to differences in debt, but did not link their differences in salary to differences in compensation for the roles that they played in their jobs.

During our third interview Samantha pointed to the last sentence about differences in occupation and expanded her reasons for preferring to date someone who had a different perspective than she. Samantha explained that she preferred to date someone who differed from her in some way, though this did not necessarily have to be in terms of gender role ideology. She noted that she was glad that her boyfriend had a different kind of career because this provided interest and a different perspective to her life that kept her from feeling “bored” in the relationship. She also said that she did not want a partner who was too closely matched to her “helper- motherly role” because this would be “too much.”

This added narrative reflected a change in Samantha’s stance during the interviews, since this time, she was willing to shape the narrative by taking it into a direction that I had not anticipated. Instead of keeping to my structure of the paragraph which is more focused on Samantha’s internalized gender prescriptions, she expanded a minor point to show that she was not passive in her selection of a partner. Instead, she was someone who sought a “challenge” by seeking partners who were different and could provide her with another perspective. It was clear that Samantha was not saying that she sought someone to mold her ideology to, but instead, was secure enough to reflect on her value system and maintain openness to change.

During all three interviews, Samantha and I talked about the ways that the different gender role expectations played a large part in disagreements between she and her boyfriend about financial security and job expectations. Samantha’s justification for independence during the first interview suggested that she felt a need to justify her desire for choices and independence. On the other hand, neither of us questioned her

boyfriend's expectation to stay in the work force even if he was hurt while on a job. The fact that we explored childcare when talking about Samantha's career goals suggested that this was very much a part of Samantha's experience of being a woman even though Samantha did not yet have children.

During the second interview Samantha expanded this dialogue and disclosed her frustration with herself for assuming that "men can do things better" or that they should earn more money than the women with whom they were partnered. I validated Samantha's disclosure and added that she had the same insight during the previous meeting. Samantha offered further support for her insight by referencing a movie where the main character was teased because he was a nurse instead of in a "position of authority," something on the "front line."

During the third interview Samantha expressed her gratitude for this project because our conversations helped her to recognize and confront gender role differences with her boyfriend. Samantha said that the discussions between she and her boyfriend continued and helped both of them to feel more secure in the relationship because they felt that they had a better understanding of each other. She also reported that she and her mother talked more frequently about women's issues, particularly the denigrating depictions of women being responsible for household maintenance and cleanliness without reciprocal expectations for men.

During the second interview I internalized my authority in an oppressive way by silencing Samantha's ability to take issue with traditional values and choosing her own response. When we talked about gender role expectations, particularly Samantha's disclosure about the way that her boyfriend presented his expectations, I expressed my

outrage directly. I said that I could not believe that her boyfriend “said that to [her].” Several times I also expressed disbelief and disapproval directly by saying “wow” after Samantha talked, particularly about her job being viewed as “expendable.”

The oppressive stance that I internalized was patriarchal in that I effectively pressured Samantha to justify her views instead of expressing them. This was counterproductive to the project because I aimed to empower Samantha, and instead silenced her. Even though I viewed her boyfriend’s gender prescriptions as oppressive, it was more important that I validated Samantha’s frustration than judge her boyfriend or her relationship.

When I caught sight of my silencing comments I tried to be more supportive of Samantha’s own disapproval and dismay for being told what to do. I also brought in the context from which the issue was emerging to validate the fact that we were talking about gender issues and this lens was likely to influence how she interpreted her experiences. Following this clarification, Samantha was able to move away from her justifications and transitioned to the topic of “degrading” portrayals of women in particular music genres.

III. Gender uncovered

A. Parallel process: power dynamics in dialogue

Just as it took a while for Samantha to identify gender as an issue of oppression, we took a while to address gender issues in our first interview. The development of the narrative was chronologically parallel to Samantha’s growing awareness of gender issues. She initiated discussion about the gender-focused course, and moved on to issues of racial oppression before identifying gendered oppression. Samantha validated this interpretation of our dialogue during the second interview.

When Samantha did initiate a discussion about her realization that women were often portrayed in degrading ways by the media I decided to stop her and asked her to tie this concern into her longstanding concerns about the lack of representation of different racial and ethnic groups. What stood out to me was the idea that she was aware of the lack of racial and ethnic diversity and this lack of representation seems to me to emanate from the same standard that offers few forums for women.

Samantha was not particularly attuned to power dynamics inherent within the lack of representation of marginalized groups by the media. Samantha's lack of attunement to power dynamics may have compromised her ability to recognize the degrading ways that women are portrayed because she did not immediately connect lack of representation as a strategy of oppression. By posing media coverage as objective, without bias, the patriarchal discourse successfully deflects attention away from the effects of silence and absence. When we assume that information, whether through media or other information forums, emerges without an agenda we are caught within a patriarchal discourse. As a result, oppression becomes linked to the marginalized group instead of the strategies of power that are oppressive.

During the third interview Samantha agreed with my interpretation that she often did not conceptualize oppression in terms of power dynamics. She reported that she had never even considered this until I brought this up in our interviews. She discussed this issue with her mother, and they linked this lack of recognition of power to the lack of attention the media offered about this. Samantha explained that most of us seem to get our values from television because we are tired after work and want to sit and relax, and take in whatever the media puts out. She noted that the sheer repetition of the same

messages led to a lack of reflection about where these ideas and images come from and what they mean.

Samantha's emphasis on media representation during all three interviews also lent support to the idea that women's absence from cultural production/representation has resulted in an oppressed position. According to Rich (1979), each feminist work appears "as if from nowhere" (p. 53). This historical lack of women's cultural representation has left women dis-empowered and excluded from the production of cultural forms (Spender, 1980, Irigaray, 1985, hooks, 1990). This theme emerged and was validated by Samantha because she was willing to share her insight, and as such disrupt her own assumption that she had nothing important to add.

During the second interview Samantha and I addressed the issues that covered over gender as a mark of oppression. Samantha admitted that she never thought about the strong alignment that people had to gender because it was everywhere. She added that gender was in school, work, and family and was even discussed in religious forums and justified with the Bible. She said that it was difficult to even begin to consider where gender came from, or how gender could be changed because it was in all aspects of our lives. I validated Samantha's uncertainty because she seemed to be apologetic when she admitted that she had not considered gender initially. I disclosed that I believed that the constancy of gendered discourse was the very issue that made it so difficult to think about and to conceptualize in different ways.

Samantha and I also tended to avoid power dynamics inherent within our own relationship. We were more willing to address this issue directly in our second meeting which suggests that there was a level of risk in this dialogue that perhaps may have felt

too disruptive to bring up in a new relationship. As the researcher, I retained more power to shape our discourse than Samantha and thus held the burden of addressing our power dynamics. Samantha reassured me that she did not feel silenced by me during both interviews even though she admitted that she was concerned that she would share irrelevant information.

Samantha and I were able to disrupt the power dynamic by ending our silence about racial difference between us. My willingness to call attention to our differences in race and privilege, and Samantha's willingness to assert that she faced more oppression by being identified as an African American female, disrupted the silence. Instead of allowing this dynamic of difference to retain power through silence, we were actually able to talk about the differences in oppression. I felt that this openness allowed Samantha and I to connect to each other as we lived through gendered, racial, class, and other marks of differentiation and privilege.

Samantha helped me to recognize the power differences that existed in terms of gender roles and family dynamics in African American culture. This helped me to contextualize the ambivalence about oppression that I heard in Samantha's voice during both interviews. Samantha's willingness to speak openly about the "muddy" roles that existed in African American family dynamics positioned Samantha's ambivalence as an effect of living a different conceptualization of gender, than I, as a white woman had anticipated.

The recognition of difference between Samantha and I helped me to re-structure our dialogue as it emerged in ambivalence. My decision to organize our narrative in terms of gender being covered over and then uncovered emerged when I was willing to

acknowledge that Samantha's ambivalence about gendered prescriptions needed to be explicit. I then was able to reinterpret Samantha's endorsement of views that posed gender as performance, because this did not mark as big of a shift in gendered views than I had initially interpreted. Gender as performance fit with Samantha's experience of "muddy" gender role prescriptions in a more experiential way than it did for me, and I was the feminist!

B. Degraded views of women

Samantha pointed to history, both personal and that of the larger culture to derive reasons for the degraded views of women as they existed particularly in "her culture." Samantha discussed this at length with her boyfriend, and they linked historical sexualized depictions of Black men and women to current identifications with this view. Samantha claimed that the current difference was that the African Americans were identifying with, and therefore complying with a demeaned role without contribution from the "white people." Samantha's awareness and heightened sensitivity to issues of race suggested otherwise.

During the third interview Samantha requested clarification about her quote about African Americans adopting sexualized and denigrated identities without influence or pressure from white people. She commented that she knew she said something like that, and clarified that she did not fully endorse this idea, but was at a loss to explain this. She agreed with my interpretation that the pressure to internalize a denigrated identity must be connected to the larger cultural context.

Samantha's decision to silence her feelings about those who held more privilege seemed to be a strategy to appease me, as I was the person with more privilege by virtue

of my race and position as the researcher. Confronting this silence, as we did when we spoke about our racial difference, helped to contradict Samantha's disclosure during the first interview. We broke the silence by giving voice to the prejudices that structured our dialogue.

Instead of using Samantha's disclosure that "her own people" adopted a sexualized identity without pressure from the dominant-white-male culture as an example of internalized shame, I wanted to use this example as an illustration of the way that the silencing of power dynamics were employed within our current system. hooks (1990) expounded on the effective silencing techniques employed by the current system when it is left without critique. In her words,

This power structure, not coincidentally was molded or created from within the existing white patriarchal system of domination. By not critiquing the existing system of domination, radical struggle is undermined (p. 16).

Samantha and I linked the degraded views of African American women to a hierarchical model of power, where one group of people, or in this case many groups are put down for another group(s) to feel powerful. This fit with Rubin (1997) and Wittig's (1997) theory that oppression lies at the very root of distinguishing between genders, or in this context race and gender. hooks (1984) went further, and noted that "sexism was always a political stance that mediated racial domination in which white and black men share a common sensibility about sex roles and the importance of male supremacy (p. 59). By recognizing the damage that we have all suffered by one mark or another we begin to become aware of our oppression. As such, the very possibility of resistance becomes possible (Wittig, 1997, p. 270).

Samantha and I agreed that the Black men seemed to be putting African American women down in an effort to feel “better.” In other words, the African American men gained power and comfort in their oppressed condition by turning on those whom they could oppress. Since the African American female is viewed as inferior because she holds two marks of oppression, race and gender, she has become the target.

During the second interview Samantha expanded this discussion by noting that markers of marginalization such as race, made it more difficult for men in marginalized groups to live up to the expectations of males. She noted that the difficulty defining new roles for marginalized men may also be exasperated by African American women who are used to assuming prescriptions that were typically considered masculine because the men were no longer there to fulfill these roles. Samantha’s insight was in keeping with hooks (1990) theory that men from marginalized groups “often suffer from blindly and passively acting out a myth of masculinity that is life threatening” since their sexist thinking “blinds them to the reality that they are also victims of patriarchy” (p. 63).

Samantha’s questions, about the groups that people formed in her cafeteria along lines of difference in the absence of overt pressure, may be looked at as a means of identifying with the categories of difference. This identification can be positive in terms of lending a sense of unity and connection to others. Connecting with others on the basis of marks of marginalization can also be seen as a sign that there is a need to unify because of oppression and prejudice, much like feminist affiliation.

I believe that Irigaray’s analysis of gendered identity as it exists in a patriarchal context can be expanded to include issues of race and any other mark of oppression. Irigaray (1985) pointed out that the patriarchal order “produced” woman as a lack

because she is dependent upon man to define her (p. 26). Just as Samantha highlighted, people defined by marks of race that are not Caucasian have also been defined as less than, and are constricted by their lack of opportunities. Marginalized groups are oppressed by virtue of their marks that are defined as lacking. As the gender or other marginalized group that is oppressed, women and marginalized groups gain a sense of worth only in so far as the white men around them grant them this privilege.

According to Samantha, the African American culture looked at the illegitimate children phenomenon as a “good thing.” Women are seen as dispensable, as places for men to “spread their seed” (lines 575-576). As objects that retain no value outside of the men that dictate this value, women are forced to acquiesce, and eventually internalize the message that they are not worth much. Women, particularly those with more than one mark of oppression, take on the role of “relinquishing their bodies to [men] in an effort to compensate for not being men (Irigaray, 1985, p. 26). The women that Samantha referenced, both the rappers who promote themselves as the “biggest whores in the world,” and the baby mama’s who “just don’t care,” lend support for this theory (lines 468-470 & 666-667).

C. Reconceptualizing gender

Even though heterosexuality as the primary representation of sexuality was not threatened by Samantha’s relationship with her boyfriend, traditional gender role ideologies and subsequent gender identifications were. Samantha was not willing to assume the role of wife and mother without discussion. Differences in gender role ideology led to a disruption in the harmony of the relationship while also disrupting the

assumption that being a woman, or a man, necessarily meant something outside of particular and personal contexts.

This disruption of harmony, however, need not be detrimental instead it could provide the space to reconsider gender ideology and subsequent decisions in a way that was less constricting for both Samantha and her boyfriend. Samantha's boyfriend's assumption of traditional gender roles was dependent upon Samantha's willingness to concede to what has traditionally been considered feminine-motherhood. It was also founded on the idea that childcare could not be an option for him. Simultaneously, Samantha's belief that her boyfriend would not consider being supported financially by her, also called attention to the idea that it would be ok for Samantha to rely on him for financial support but this would not be an option for him.

During the second interview Samantha reported that she and her boyfriend talked about their differences in gender role expectations, and this helped them to figure out what expectations they had of each other. Samantha told her boyfriend that she was frustrated by the pressure he was putting on her to quit her job. She explained that she wanted emotional support instead of advice. By asserting herself and opening up the dialogue about gender roles and expectations, Samantha learned that her boyfriend did not want to control her. He explained that he wanted to help and expected that the best way to do this was to provide his role as a "problem solver," since this had typically been the role he adopted at work and in his personal relationships. Samantha reported that both she and her boyfriend felt better able to listen to each other's needs and this helped them address issues that had been looming for awhile, such as the care for his daughter.

By calling attention to choice and liberating women from an assumed biological destiny, gender is being called into question as a biological given. If women and men could be liberated from their biological destinies, gendered categories could be called into question for all of us, and oppressive differentiation could be disrupted and perhaps even eradicated altogether. Samantha's recognition of the oppressive links to biology provided me with a link to Butler's (1990) theory of gender as performance. Butler (1990) argued for a liberation of gender and other seemingly biologically linked markers, to reconfigure identity as "effect" (p. 147). In other words, gendered identity would no longer be seen as a given, nor would it be seen as completely arbitrary. Instead, identity would exist in so far as it was participated in, repeated, and thus lent itself to critique and change (p. 147). Both women and men would be liberated from constricted prescriptions that kept them from making choices that fit with individual identities.

Samantha was less ambivalent about her desire to hold on to her gendered marking during our second interview. She talked of Butler's theory of relinquishing ties to constricting gendered categories as a "wonderful notion" that she could support. Samantha's description of African American gender roles as "muddy" lends support to the idea that this conceptualization was not altogether foreign to Samantha, since she grew up in a culture that was not as constricting about gender roles. Samantha's cultural context must also be placed within the larger dominant discourse that is gendered and oppressive to groups that are not straight, white, male and Christian.

Situating gender and other marks of difference within the context of patriarchy makes it difficult to imagine "muddier" identities, gendered or otherwise. Samantha acknowledged that conceptualizing gender, as a performative mark, would be "too much

for many people to handle.” She warned that gender was not the only mark of stigma, since all of the “other issues” such as homosexuality would come up and people would have to “think out of the box.” Despite these issues, Samantha said again that liberation of gender from our present categories made sense to her, even though she did not anticipate that this would soon change.

In fact, Samantha commented several times that the equation of women with childbearing never even occurred to her until she faced some medical issues, and again confronted the topic when it came up in her gender-focused course. The fact that some women “really “ equated childbearing with womanhood was “amazing” to Samantha. In connection to her assumption that this was not an issue that women of her age (at the time of the course) would identify with, she was not surprised that this topic did not generate much discussion. She assumed that this was an issue of interest for her because she was the only one in class that this effected. When I pointed out that this might not have been the case, Samantha acknowledged that she was “brave enough” to talk about this because “well it’s who I am.”

IV. Resisting oppression

A. Samantha as an activist

Even though Samantha did not identify as a feminist, or as someone who was oppressed by gender, she was aware of the differentiation between expectations for women and men, and those of different racial identifications. She was someone who evaluated decisions about her spending practices and relationships according to her beliefs. She also maintained a non-judgmental stance that provided room for further change. This openness to other’s opinions was apparent in the study by way of direct

disclosures and her willingness to reserve judgement about me and my agenda even though she did not identify with this agenda herself.

By reflecting on the issue of childbearing, Samantha acknowledged that this equation of women and motherhood did not fit with her experience. Instead this equation fit with “traditional role” assumptions that defined women as less than. It also helped her to see herself as someone who was much more aware and willing to give voice to alternative views of gender.

In addition to her willingness to speak up about herself and give voice to an alternate view of women, she was someone who often made choices that reflected her values and identification as a person who was aware of issues of oppression. For example, Samantha made a conscious choice not to purchase music that depicted women in demeaning ways even if she liked the beat of the music and danced to it if on in a club. She was also reluctant to continue dating her current boyfriend when she found out that he had a child out of wedlock. She made the decision to stay with him when she discovered that he did take responsibility for the child financially and in a direct care-taking role.

B. Feminists as bra burners

Samantha insisted during the first interview that she did not identify herself as a feminist because she did not have an informed definition. Earlier in the interview, however, she defined her teacher’s identification with feminism as a stance that was concerned about “the way women are perceived” (line 88). Because this concern about people’s perception of women was the same issue that Samantha identified, it seems unlikely that this was a barrier to identifying with feminism. Instead, Samantha’s lack of

identification with feminism seemed more linked to the stereotypes associated with feminism since this was the most prominent issue that emerged. What I did not interpret was my desire or ability to silence a stance that was in opposition to my own. In this way I was playing into a totalizing discourse that covered over the potential for oppression.

Samantha said she was left with only the “stereotypical view of feminists” as these “bra burning women running around and saying we’re equal...we can do whatever we want but you know what I mean/.../” (lines 912-914). In Samantha’s words, “like God/.../I was like I don’t identify with that but then I/.../I don’t have a definition for myself/.../” (line 914). The bra burners running around may not be closely linked to Samantha’s experience, but the desire to make choices and demand the right to do so did fit with Samantha’s discussion during all three of the interviews.

During the second interview Samantha laughed about the title of this section and said that the stigma attached to feminism kept her from identifying as a feminist. Samantha went on to say that “anyone that did not immediately ascribe to traditional norms” was stigmatized and seen as a “rebel.” She explained that “people who degrade feminism don’t want to tell you the truth about it.” She said that the things that she had heard about feminism were not true. I missed my opportunity to ask if Samantha’s defense of feminism signified a change in her identification with feminism. I did interpret this as a sign that she was not as opposed to it as she seemed to be during the first interview.

According to Williams and Wittig, (1997), most women do not endorse feminism because of the stigma attached to feminist identification. They argued that this often stemmed from a lack of information and a preponderance of misinformation. I would add

that the apathy and lack of information about feminism comes from the successful covering over of anything that threatens the current power structure. Feminist literature has thoroughly argued that women's historical absence from cultural representation has resulted in an oppressed position, making it difficult for women to begin to re-appropriate their position (Rich, 1979, p. 53).

C. Giving voice to the oppressed threatens oppression

Samantha's willingness to participate helped me to form a bond with another woman and confront our differences and strengths together in a mode of resistance (hooks, 1984). Samantha provided me with an opportunity to talk with someone who recognized different meanings and issues apparent within our current time and place. Because we looked at issues through different lenses we were able create a dialogue that was multiple, contradictory at times, and clarifying nonetheless about the ambiguity that is gendered experience. I respected Samantha's candidness and hoped that our interviews helped her to see herself from a new perspective as a person positioned in an oppressive society with the possibility of resistance through open dialogue.

Samantha's desire to hear other's views was countered by her difficulty feeling empowered enough to express her voice. At the end of the first interview Samantha talked of being in "[her] head...all the time" and said that she valued the chance to get feedback from someone else. I interpreted this to mean that she rarely felt that she had the opportunity to talk about her views. She expressed surprise when I asked her to elaborate on her ideas about the emergence of degrading portrayals of women, and during the first two interviews I had to make frequent requests to encourage Samantha to elaborate on

her views. I wondered if this was an issue of me not providing enough openness in our dialogue, or that she did not expect that this would be important.

During the second interview Samantha confirmed the second interpretation and spoke about her hesitance to express herself because she assumed that her comments would not be important. I encouraged Samantha during first two interviews to reconsider this stance by pointing to the multiple insights and stories of value that she had contributed to the study. I also reinforced her commentary during the second interview by requesting that she share her reactions with me as she read the narrative, instead of keeping her smiles, and laughs to herself. Samantha's comfort level seemed to change when she was willing to share a more extensive analysis of the intersections between privilege, race, and gender.

As Samantha shared more freely, her apathy about issues of oppression also gave way. During our first interview Samantha reported that she "occasionally" thought about issues of oppression, and "occasionally" considered the oppressive dynamics that constricted women's and other marginalized groups' experiences. Even though Samantha's identification with the oppression of racial groups was stronger than issues faced by women, she seemed ambivalent about the discourse of oppression in general and tended to back away from dialogues of power. During the second and third interviews however, Samantha's frustration about feeling less able and being perceived as less competent by those who fit within privileged positions became clearer. Samantha's frustration with racial oppression being a primary mark of oppression, with the mark of woman being secondary, was clear as she defined her position as "bottom of the barrel."

APPENDIX I

Individualized Accounts

Irigaray (1985) argued that multiplicity and ambiguity threatened the current linearity of patriarchy. Samantha's willingness to reflect on her own values and assumptions and call them into question showed that she was willing to consider the ambiguity of our identification as women, and in Samantha's case an African American woman. By sharing her views Samantha became more aware of her own choices and the ways in which she did not fit neatly within gendered categories that are typically assumed to be clear and mutually exclusive. This study seemed to help Samantha reflect on her views about women's and other marginalized groups current positions in society in a similar way to her participation in a gender-focused course.

By listening to herself during the interview she recognized that she had strong feelings about the different expectations of gender roles and marks of oppression. This recognition provoked Samantha to open up a dialogue about gendered prescriptions with her boyfriend that helped them gain clarity about their expectations of each other. The interview also gave Samantha a place to focus on and explore her views about herself as an African American woman living in a patriarchal society. In this way Samantha regained her voice, and offered others a glimpse into the ambiguity of marks of oppression by resisting the silence prescribed for these marks.